

THE CORNHILL



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EDITORIAL NOTE

The writer who turns editor is in the position of an unruly parish priest suddenly elevated to a bishopric. Failings, that, until a few weeks ago, had appeared human and defensible, re-emerge as vices threatening the very basis of society. The editor's days are haunted by thoughts of the promised articles that remain unfinished, his nights troubled by visions of the uncorrected proof. Add to this, all the incidental difficulties of editing in war-time. . . . Nevertheless, the CORNHILL would like to express its gratitude both for the support it has received from writers and for the extremely generous response of kindly readers. One useful criticism has come our way—that the last number was lacking in what our critic called 'roughage', that most of our contributors were already well-known, the age-level was fairly high, and the general tone of the production smoothly accomplished rather than adventurous. The second number of the revived CORNHILL attempts to redress the balance. Here are fewer well-known names a larger admixture of youth and a somewhat wider range of subjects. We have printed an essay in French—for the very good reason that it did not seem to us to be translatable: a young novelist contributes a chapter of his autobiography: a member of parliament has drawn the portrait of a contemporary British prophet. Literary and art criticism, fiction, verse, topographical writing are also represented. We hope that we shall continue to widen our scope. Our ability to do so will be limited only by the zeal, intelligence and good-will supplied by our contributors.

"THE SEVENTH CITY OF CHRISTENDOM"

BY OSBERT LANCASTER



In a war so widespread and so prolonged a certain degree of glamour invests, for us, even the dimmest of neutral capitals. Over there one thinks, the lights will be up, restrictions will not apply and every bar will acquire, from the possibility of its sheltering enemy agents, a stimulating flavour of the *roman policier*. How false an idea the harbouring of such illusions may create about Berne or Lisbon or Stockholm one does not know, but in the case of Dublin it acts not only as a welcome stimulant, but also as a valuable corrective. In peacetime a first visit to Dublin must in some slight degree approximate to the provincial excursion; even the sea-crossing, the street-names in Irish and the customs examination will not prove sufficient wholly to convince us that we are engaged on foreign travel, so long does it take to get accustomed to realities established by treaty rather than, as far as we are concerned, by conviction. Today all this is changed; Euston has acquired some of the romance that once clung to the continental side at Victoria and when at last we step out of the second-hand Swiss aeroplane, blinking slightly at the bright incandescent grass and sniffing the soft air, we have no difficulty in realising that we are, but oh so definitely, abroad.

Abroad not only in space but also in time. The drive from the airport through the slums of the North Side acts on those whose childhood was spent in the London of the peace before last like the tea-soaked Madeleine on the middle-aged Proust. The brassy, baroque glitter of the public-houses, the barefoot children, the abundance of horse-traffic, the robust and florid lettering above the shop-fronts: all speak to us of the pre-Woolworth age, bathed in the last dying light of that long summer day through which Daedalus and Bloom pursued their involved courses. Soon, however, as one

drives past Mountjoy Square, the vision fades, to be replaced by hints and suggestions of a past that no one now living can recall. The long eighteenth-century perspectives of the side-streets (and how the drama of these perspectives is reinforced and driven home by the Dublin habit of painting the returns of the windows a lighter colour than the surrounding brick) peopled with swarming throngs of children, loafers, shawled women, nuns and beggars, inevitably cut across in the middle distance by a funeral cortège passing along a route parallel to ours, are obviously the creation of Cruikshank.

On reaching the quays one realises once again (with, if one is a Londoner, a salutary shock) how important a rôle a river can play in the rational and æsthetic development of a town. The English, as a race, seem curiously ashamed of their rivers, regarding them, as regrettable and slightly indecent intrusions on the urban scene, to be concealed as completely as possible from the notice of the citizens by means of warehouses, factory buildings and high brick walls. Not so the Dubliners; they, like the Parisians and the Florentines, have made their river one of the principal glories of their city, concentrating upon its banks their finest public buildings and spanning it with a series of magnificent bridges. As rivers go, the Liffey is not remarkable, narrower than the Seine if more impressive than the Arno; but, thanks to the skill with which in the eighteenth century it was treated architecturally, it fulfils an æsthetic function comparable to that of the Grand Canal. Indeed, it is of Venice that one is immediately reminded as one takes one's stand on the Iron Bridge—far more vividly than ever one is at Bruges or Stockholm, or any of the other towns described in travel brochures as the 'Venice of the North.' In part this is due to the presence of the sea, out of sight but never, thanks to the smell, the innumerable gulls and the spacious, marine quality of the light, out of mind; in part, to the prevailing colour, a pinkish red, although among its innumerable gradations are tones that one would seek for in vain, on the lagoons—in particular, a cool and slightly dirty pink, the exact shade, not of real shrimps, but of these sugar-coated chocolate shrimps that, before the war, were still occasionally obtainable in old-fashioned seaside sweetshops.

Dublin and Venice have more in common than the fortuitous effects of atmosphere and colour. Both cities are the fruit of a cross-fertilisation of two distinct and opposing cultures. In Venice, the Byzantine element is overlaid, but never wholly suppressed, by the classical top-dressing of the international style of the Renaissance; in Dublin, behind a façade constructed in the eighteenth-century English version of this same Renaissance style (incidentally Dublin and Leningrad must be the last two cities which, in their present form were planned throughout in the classical idiom), elements of an age-old and apparently irrepressible Celtic culture are imperfectly con-

ceased. This aboriginal vitality manifests itself, just as it did a thousand years ago, in a pre-occupation with pattern that today reaches its finest expression on the façades of public-houses. At the end of some long, logical vista there shines and glitters, in all the improbable glory of orange paint, pink pointing, imitation cut-stonework and false graining, the licensed premises of, say, Patrick McGinty. Every inch of the visible surface has been

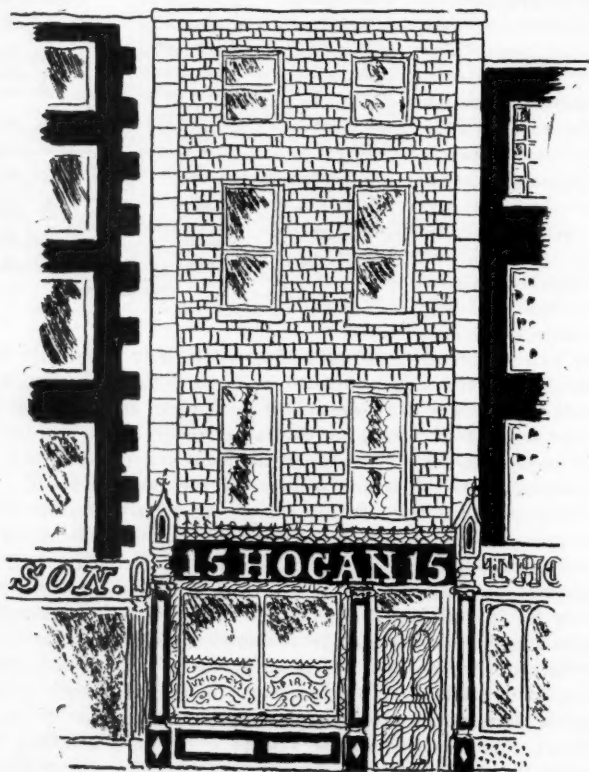


covered with elaborate patterns which, while they frequently have as their basis some commonplace of architectural small-talk, a rusticated key-stone or the graining of pitch-pine, employed with as little representational intent as similar elements in a still-life by Braque, have long since abandoned all functional pretence and are as formalised as the birds and serpents of the Book of Kells. The static elements of the original façade, the quoins, the window surrounds, the imitation Renaissance iron-work, all the pathetic clichés of the final, Victorian stage of the classical decline, are here absorbed and transfigured. At last, the Celt has prevailed over the Latin.

However, it is doubtful whether the more racially conscious of the natives take much pleasure in this modest triumph. Their faces do not light up with pride if one is so tactless as to draw attention to these robust examples of the vernacular. The land of their dreams, thick with round towers and peopled by a godlike race of peasant proprietors, clad in hand-woven saffron tweed and drinking from replicas of the Ardagh chalice, has no place for the unselfconscious fantasies of the Dublin housepainter. And it is greatly to be feared that these admirable examples of a healthy and still flourishing popular art, which almost everywhere else in Western Europe has died out within living memory, will not long survive, on the one hand, the encroachments of chain-store civilisation, which it seems unlikely that, even Eire will be able indefinitely to keep at bay, and on the other an Irish equivalent of militant, olde-worlde Cotswold revivalism.

Stimulating and surprising as such humble buildings are, it is not to them that Dublin owes her reputation as one of the architecturally

great cities of the western world, but to the genius of those architects and town-planners responsible for the sudden expansion which took place in the late eighteenth century. To the Englishman it is the scale on which the plans were conceived that most astonishes, and that makes a small town comparable, not to towns of a similar size on



the other side of St. George's channel, but to the great cities of Europe. Thanks to the Wide Street Commissioners, Bedford Square and the Place Vendôme together would fit into Merrion Square with room to spare, and a side turning such as Mount Street has all the dignity of a processional way. The two architects, to whom the principal masterpieces of the period are due, Gandon and Johnston, are, or rather should be, figures of international renown. In so far as they are not, the fault lies in part with English critics and historians, always

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unaccountably neglectful of Ireland, but even more with the Irish themselves, to whom the origins of these two great men render them if not odious at least uninteresting, and who display none of that ability to adopt and absorb into their own cultural history artists of foreign birth which enables the Russians, for instance, to take a proper national pride in the achievements of Cameron and Quarenghi.

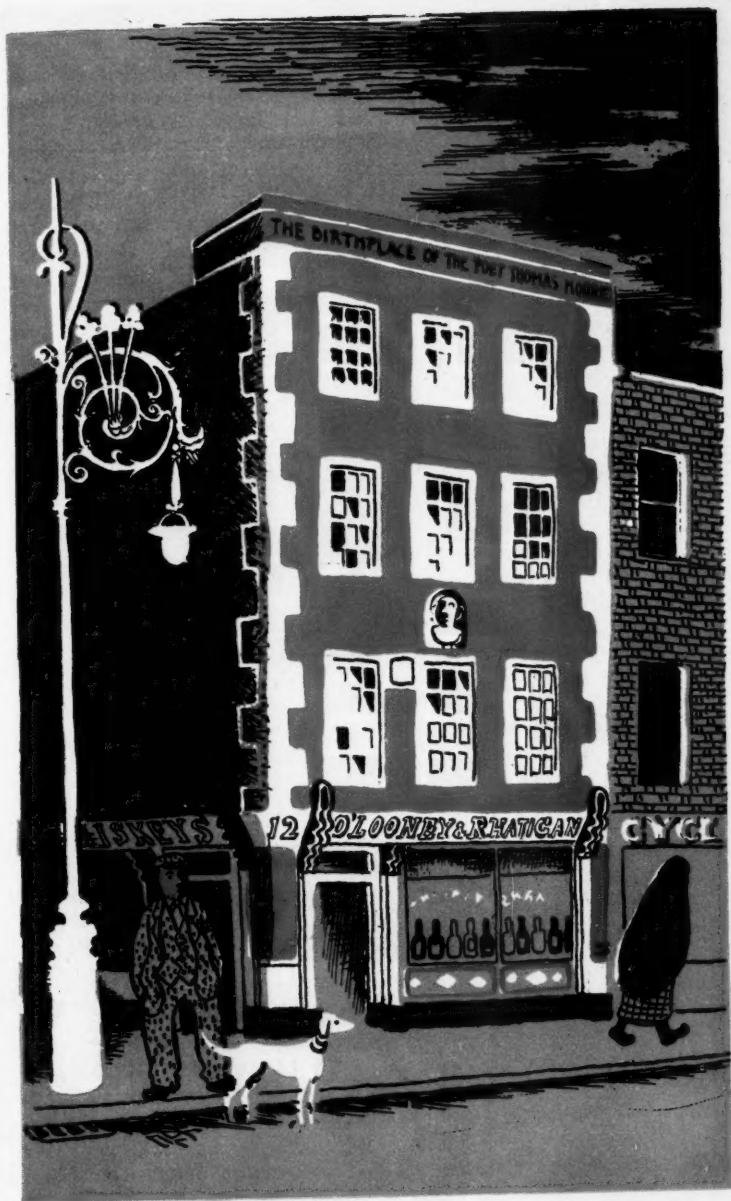
Gandon's masterpiece is, undoubtedly, the Four Courts. Conceived on a noble scale and magnificently sited, it is one of the great European buildings of its period, and the shallow green dome crowning the mighty pillared drum, produces that effect of mingled surprise and inevitability that only really great architects can ever successfully achieve. The restraint that led Gandon to crown his work not with a huge and doubtless impressive half-sphere terminating in a conventional lantern but with this shallow saucer of copper has just that quality of daring which Fischer von Ehrlach displayed when he placed those twin triumphal columns so unexpectedly at the west end of the Karlskirche. Beside this the dome of the Customs House, in every other way as fine a building, has a rather pedestrian look ; but then, it was entirely rebuilt in the present century and, despite repeated assurances that it is an exact replica of the original, for me at any rate, there clings to it a disturbing aroma of the late Sir Aston Webb.

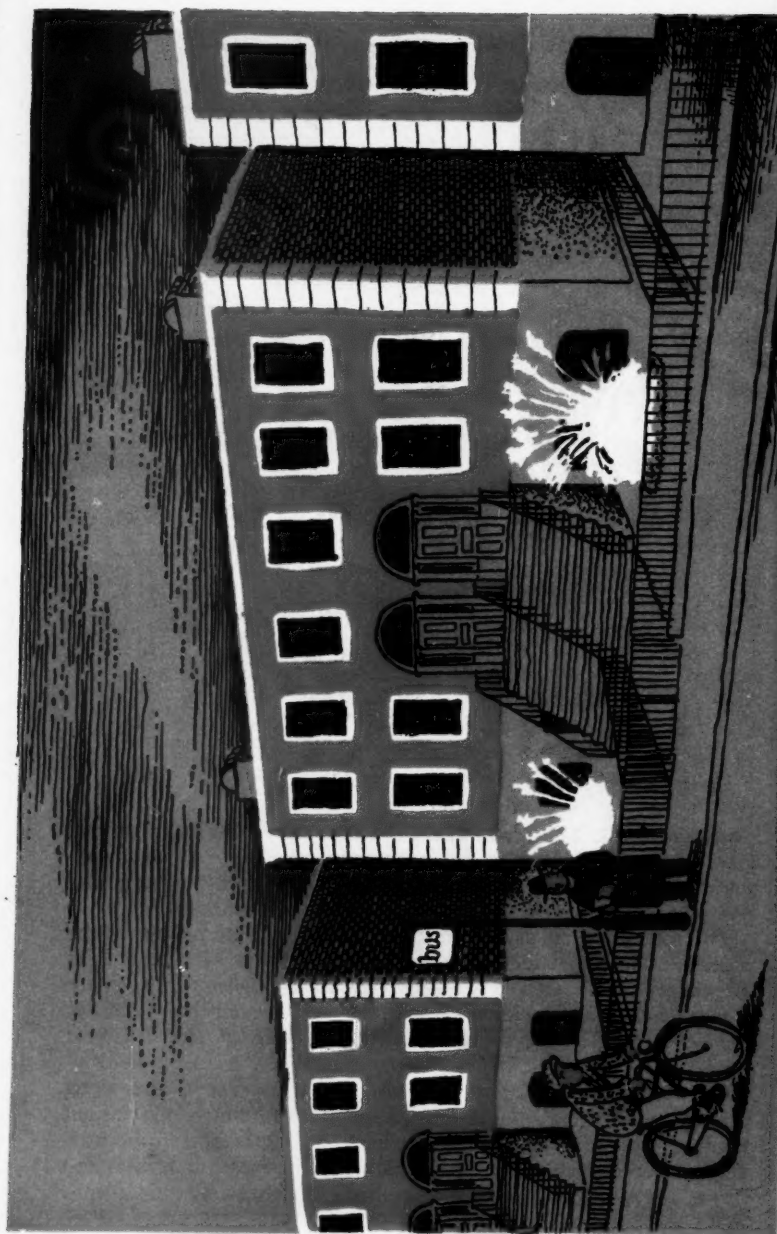
Of the innumerable works by Johnston, the most typical, if not the most inspired, is St. George's, a church which has for us today a peculiar importance. By the most exacting standards, it must be accounted a fine example of the early nineteenth-century classical church. The spire, if it lacks the delicacy of the finest of Wren's or the originality of some of Hawksmoor's, is conceived on an impressive scale and the detail is excellent ; but the value of the building as a whole lies not so much in its intrinsic architectural merits as in its setting. With the destruction of St. John's, Smith Square, this must be almost the last, as it is certainly the finest, specimen of an eighteenth-century city church which still appears today exactly as its architect intended it to appear. The wide street of brick houses along which it is approached, the curved terraces by which it is flanked, although they have sunk low in the social scale, are in appearance exactly as they were when they and the church were first built. From the contemplation of this scene, two facts, of which we may have long been empirically aware, become immediately apparent. First, Portland stone, used as Wren and Gibbs and Johnston used it, always needs the contrast of brick, which they were careful to provide, to be fully effective architecturally. Second, any tampering with the scale of the surrounding buildings immediately falsifies the architect's intention. Gothic churches, which were conceived as independent universes, can, to a certain extent, survive the proximity of office blocks and Woolworth shop-fronts : classical

churches, which form part of a complicated planetary system easily upset, cannot. This being so it follows that much of the discussion about the future of the city churches in London is without point. Unless we are prepared to restore where possible the surrounding buildings to their proper scale and texture which, if the necessary legislation were forthcoming, would not present any insuperable difficulty, it is quite useless (I am speaking purely in an architectural and not in a religious sense) to bother about the fate of any eighteenth-century church save those with fine interiors or the spires of which are still visible between the ferro-concrete fortresses of high finance.

Before abandoning this brief consideration of classic Dublin, there is one building, small in scale and remote in situation, which claims our attention. The Clontarf Casino, standing in a park to the north of the city, is not the work of an Irish, or even an Anglo-Irish, architect, but of Sir William Chambers, whose masterpiece it is. The passion of Renaissance noblemen and princes for adorning their demesnes with pavilions and summer-houses presented contemporary architects with an opportunity for displaying their powers of invention with a freedom which no other generation, before or since, has ever enjoyed. In buildings of this nature, the importance of function is reduced to a minimum and architecture becomes almost as pure and abstract an art as music. Needless to say, very few architects have ever proved themselves capable of the necessary restraint, sensibility and knowledge, fully to exploit such a chance; and I can only call to mind three completely successful examples—Wren's orangery in Kensington Gardens, the Petit Trianon and the Palazzo del Te at Mantua. These are the purest products of the architectural genius functioning, as it were, in a void, their beauties and virtues analogous to those of a mathematical formula or a fugue, compared to which the Amalienburg is the work of an inspired interior-decorator, the Zwinger of a scenic designer of genius. To these three, the Clontarf Casino is in no way inferior.

Ireland, according to George Moore, experienced no nineteenth century. So far as Dublin is concerned, this happy generalisation is, architecturally, very near the truth. The streets and terraces, which, during the Victorian Age, spread out southwards across the canal, are still Georgian in conception, and such modifications of design as were introduced arose in response to the needs of an increasing middle-class, whose ideas, unlike those of their counterpart in England, remained cast in an eighteenth-century mould. The measure of difference between the two cultures becomes immediately apparent, if one compares the Ailesbury Road in Dublin, with its terraces and semi-detached classical villas, all with their front doors on the first floor, approached by an imposing but unadorned flight of steps (a very distinctive feature of Dublin domestic architecture almost unparalleled elsewhere in these islands) with the elaborate and romantic variety of





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the Woodstock Road in Oxford. It is, therefore, all the more unexpected that there should exist in the heart of this so temperamentally alien city one of the greatest masterpieces of the Gothic Revival, the finest secular building the movement ever produced. Ruskin, it will be recalled, made a special journey to Dublin, for the sole purpose of seeing Deane and Woodward's engineering school, and, as a result of his inspection, obtained for the architects that commission for the Museum in Oxford which, in the event, turned out so disastrously.¹ While the outside of this building may possibly be considered by purists to display a certain indifference to its surroundings, the interior is superb. Never again did any Victorian architect achieve precisely that effect of controlled grandeur which Deane and Woodward so effortlessly obtained in this entrance hall and staircase. It is, indeed, the only secular building produced by the whole revival



which, at least in my view, will stand a moment's comparison with its great prototypes. After seeing it, one is more than ever convinced that Woodward's early death robbed the movement of the one architect who might have given it a permanent significance.

If Dublin was able so successfully to withstand the ravages of the nineteenth century, which everywhere else proved so disastrous, is there any chance that it can hold out against the far more formidable menace of the twentieth? The answer, I fear, is almost certainly No. Already the bypass builder, who far more than the Beveridge planner or Gerald Heard's version of the Uebermensch, seems likely to prove the key-figure of the brave new world, has made his appearance; and, along the coast road to Howth and round Clonskea are some of the nastiest housing estates to be found anywhere, distinguishable from their English counterparts only by the fact that here the mass-produced

¹ It was on this visit that Ruskin discovered the O'Sheas, and, attracted by their remarkable work on the Kildare Street Club, brought them over to Oxford.

half-timbering is painted green for patriotic reasons. Moreover, in Dublin, even the tepid indignation which such outrages occasionally provoke in England is lacking. Among the intellectuals, in whose care here, as everywhere else, the ultimate safety of any culture must reside, the older generation are lost in dreams of an imaginary past, the younger in visions of an improbable future. The Roman Church in Ireland, which (as foreigners are always surprised to discover) has very little in common with its sister churches on the continent, is with



a few outstanding exceptions rabidly anti-art. The eighteenth-century glories of the city wake little or no response in the minds of the 'majority'; they are of the past, and an English-dominated past at that; and the present generation of Irishmen like to regard themselves as belonging to a young and forward-looking nation (just how a people with so persistent an historical memory hope to bring about so strange and irrational a transformation remains a mystery), and their continued preservation is due to no sense of piety or æsthetic appreciation, but solely to lack of means.

Had funds been available, the painted houses on the quays would long since have disappeared, and the centre of Merrion Square would today be occupied by a fine new cathedral, doubtless in public-lavatory Romanesque, the style most favoured by the Irish hierarchy.

And yet, there remains a faint hope. There is at least one excellent modern building in Dublin, Desmond Fitzgerald's airport, that makes Croydon look ridiculous, Le Bourget pretentious, and which can stand comparison with the best modern buildings here or anywhere. Moreover, the Irish remain a nation of sturdy individualists, as President Roosevelt has recently discovered. It may be that those very qualities of perverseness and intransigence, which so infuriate their neighbours, will enable them to withstand the unrush of communal cocoa-centre civilisation and chain-store culture more effectively than more reasonable nations. Perhaps Ireland is destined once again to be an isolation centre of culture, during a new Dark Age, a Byzantium of the West. Undoubtedly there is no rôle which modern Eire would more enthusiastically undertake. Whether she possesses the ability to sustain it is another matter.

SEPT JOURS EN ÉTÉ...

PAR EMMANUEL D'ASTIER

FRAGMENTS D'UN JOURNAL. PARIS, AOÛT 1943

Emmanuel d'Astier, for four years one of the leaders of the underground resistance movement in France, is today Minister of the Interior in the French Committee of National Liberation at Algiers. Because we believe that much of the quality of this extraordinary and moving document might be lost during its translation into another language, we have decided to present it as it was originally composed.—Editor.

DIMANCHE

Je marche tout autour d'une grande cuve, sur un rebord étroit, avec un peu de vertige.

La grande cuve est mon passé, mes rues, des amis, des ennemis : il ne faut pas tomber dans cette cuve.

Parfois je résiste mal, je m'approche des quartiers ou des rues interdites. Hier, rue Bonaparte, je suis entré chez un bouquiniste chez qui j'allais parfois en 1936. J'ai cherché des poèmes. Le libraire m'a demandé mon nom pour m'envoyer son catalogue. Il a noté Jean Jacques Bourlier, rue des Belles Feuilles. Je ne pouvais pas partir, je ne pouvais presque pas bouger : une mouche dans du miel avec l'ombre d'une main derrière elle. Sur un rayon, entre un Apollinaire et un Barrès, j'ai trouvé un Emmanuel d'Astier. Le patron, qui surveillait mes gestes, remarqua : « Le texte est quelconque, mais les lithographies d'Anenkoff sont remarquables, je vous le laisserai à 200 Frs. » Je n'ai rien répondu ; il a continué : « Je n'osais pas vous le dire tout à l'heure, mais vous ressemblez un peu à Emmanuel d'Astier, il a été un de mes clients, il était plus maigre, plus grand, vous êtes plus brun. »

— « On m'a déjà dit que je lui ressemblais. »

— « Vous l'avez connu ? »

— « A peine. »

Je vois le fond de la cuve qui est là tout près : c'est la Place St.-Germain des Prés, les Deux Magots, le Divan, Martineau — le patron est-il derrière la vitre avec sa bile et son Stendhal ? —

Et pourtant, depuis trois ans d'Astier est si bien mort, que si l'on me chuchotait son nom à l'oreille, je ne piperais pas, tandis que pour Bernard je sursauterais.

Je prends le métro Bienvenue. C'est toujours le jeu de la cuve. Est-ce cette étonnante odeur du métro, cette odeur minérale qui, soudain, fait cohabiter en moi Hyde et Jekyll. Je m'assois sur le banc adossé à la voûte, et les affiches, en face de moi, effacent Jekyll : l'une est blanche et l'autre montre une femme épanouie, qui dit à ses enfants « Les mauvais jours sont passés, votre papa va travailler en Allemagne »...un métro passe, Jekyll écarte Hyde : debout dans la voiture de tête, avec sa lippe et ses yeux pâles, Drieu la Rochelle regarde sans me voir.

Je fais surface à la station Victor Hugo. Sur la place, il ne reste de lui que le souvenir et le socle : son corps de bronze a été envoyé à la fonte. Je trouve là mon adjoint, que nous appelons le Père des peuples, et qui m'emboîte le pas :

— « Allons jusqu'au bois, me dit-il, Ravailac veut vous serrer la main ; il reprend le maquis pour quelque temps. Son Groupe Franc a fait sa huitième opération, mais ils n'ont plus de munitions. »

Aujourd'hui, je n'aime pas le quartier. Il y a de la filature dans l'air : trop d'hommes qui ont l'air de marquer d'autres hommes, comme au rugby ; et je ne distingue pas les amis des ennemis. Même les femmes ne sont pas naturelles ; elles ont l'air trop appliquées et ne portent pas ces hauts chapeaux si vilains plantés sur le sommet de la tête et qui sont, mieux que le bas de soie, le signe d'une caste sans détour.

Au bois aussi il y a des promeneurs qui ressemblent trop aux hommes de la place Victor Hugo. Je marque au Père des peuples mon malaise.

« Non, » dit-il, « ce sont les nôtres, la protection de Ravailac est toujours un peu romanesque. »

Sous les accacias, une amazone surgit, comme un âme en peine.

LUNDI

L'odeur était là. Et cette haleine, comme un artifice, fraîche en été, chaude en hiver. Les mêmes bruits. Aucune surprise en somme, sinon cette allure d'express que prend maintenant le métro en brûlant une station sur deux, et au passage, l'aspect mystérieux des stations fermées, qui sont encore animées d'une vie furtive.

Je suis descendu à la Concorde. Au bout du couloir, autour des guichets, cinq messieurs, vêtus de noir, ficelés aux extrémités de bérêts basques et de guêtres, m'ont intercepté. Ils m'ont fait lever les bras au ciel pour me tâter, ils ont vérifié mes faux papiers, et m'ont laissé passer.

J'ai monté les marches, j'ai vu Paris et le ciel...

La Concorde, les Champs Elysées, la Seine...et Paris, assis autour comme un ange en pénitence, et bien peigné. L'air est plus léger,

les arbres plus verts, plus vifs, débarrassés des fumées et des bruits, de tous les restes d'une vie bourgeoise et trop riche. L'haleine des machines est dissipée, leur halètement s'est tu. Paris, changé en statue de sel, brillante et pure, où l'on retrouve seul comme un souvenir la vibration du sol sous les pieds, quand passe un métro.

J'ai longé la Seine qui a maintenant l'air endimanché entre ses quais déserts. Les statues de bronze sont descendues de leurs socles, ajoutant aux maléfices de cette semaine des sept dimanches.

Tandis que je remonte, entre les marronniers, la piste cavalière de l'avenue Henri Martin, je vois sur ma gauche, empalés sur une Mercedes noire, comme soldats de plomb, un capitaine de vaisseau de la Kriegsmarine et son marin aux rubans sur la nuque. Au carrefour de la Pompe, ce jouet bien astiqué croise un autre jouet — français celui-là — un coupé tiré par une jument bien bouchonnée, gonflée d'avoine et qui contient un vieux monsieur habillé par Carette, le menton posé sur sa canne.

MARDI

J'ai été suivi ce matin. Il m'a fallu une demi-heure pour dépister le suiveur sans lui donner l'impression que je cherchais à lui échapper, et pour connaître son visage sans lui livrer le mien. Puis je suis rentré chez moi : j'ai mis un imperméable et j'ai changé de chapeau. Ce sont les silhouettes qui vous trahissent.

La Seine est jaune et basse. Les pieds du zouave de l'Alma sont bien au sec. Je me suis accoudé au parapet, fasciné par une péniche, la Marie-Claude.

A cinq pas de moi s'est installé un homme. Était-ce avant, était-ce après?... Trop bien vêtu, tiré à quatre épingles, il n'était pas mis comme un homme qui s'accoude à un parapet.

Quand j'ai vu son visage, je l'ai reconnu à sa barbiche et à une vague ressemblance avec Trotzky. C'est le chapeau melon et les gants beurre frais qui auraient pu m'empêcher de situer le visage et l'histoire.

Comment se faisait-il appeler? — Durand...c'est cela : et c'était comique, parce qu'il était tout le contraire d'un Durand avec son air balkanique d'agent provocateur et son accent italien. Il a traversé ma vie voilà six mois : nous étions sur une barque — une plate plus exactement — à minuit, au large des côtes françaises. Nous étions cinq dans cette plate : Graule et moi, l'individu et une femme, enfin le rameur. Cette mer aussi morte qu'un lac, ces avirons dont les pelles étaient entourées de chiffons : je n'ai jamais connu un tel silence, une telle tension pour respecter un silence.

Alors l'individu a tiré quelques papiers de sa poche, s'est penché en avant et a gratté une allumette sous le banc de la barque pour brûler les papiers. Il gardait les cendres dans sa main, et au fur et à mesure les jetait à l'eau. Et le rameur pestait à voix basse contre cette imprudence, dans une langue qui devait être le tchèque.

Après, je me souviens du frottement de la plate contre les galets et d'une question chuchotée par la femme : « de quel côté allez-vous ? »...et de ma réponse : « de l'autre côté »...

Nous étions partis deux par deux, — l'italien avec la femme — et nous ne nous étions plus jamais revus. J'avais appris plus tard que Graule avait été abattu d'une balle dans le ventre à la frontière suisse, et que le rameur avait été tué d'un coup de couteau entre les épaules par un mari jaloux. Quant à l'homme et à la femme, ils s'étaient dissipés en fumée.

Et voilà que six mois après il était posé à cinq mètres de moi, au bord de la Seine. Avec ses gants, son melon et son pantalon rayé, il avait l'air d'un coulisier. Quand il tourna légèrement la tête pour regarder le zouave, je pus croire qu'il m'avait vu. Pourtant nos profils étaient bien alignés et nous ne louchions pas. Seulement nous étions trop immobiles, changés en pierre.

Il se redressa, passa derrière moi si près que j'entendis le frôlement de ses vêtements aussi distinctement que celui de notre barque fendant l'eau morte.

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Je traversai de grands espaces déserts avant de trouver un endroit peuplé : les Tuileries ou des femmes assises et des enfants lents faisaient cercle autour des bassins. Mais ce n'est qu'à l'orée de la rue des Halles et du boulevard Sébastopol que je rentrai chez les hommes...une mer humaine qui depuis mon passage le matin avait dévasté les éventaires et les étals sans parvenir à apaiser sa faim.

MERCREDI

Il y a encore beaucoup de jolies filles, mais l'amour est absent. La corporation des suiveurs amateurs est réduite à sa plus simple expression. Personne ne s'embrasse dans la rue, peu de gens flânent. Le Parisien est devenu plus farouché et plus maigre, purifié et perspicace. Lui, qui faisait de tous les étrangers des amis, il a trouvé moyen de rendre étrangers les barbares. Quatre fois par jour, il monte ou descend dans la rue, comme une marée, pour prendre ou quitter le travail, avec une tête de fourmi méfiante.

Hors les grands centres métropolitains — Châtelet, Opéra, République, Pigalle, — on est saisi par la province. L'atmosphère y est silencieuse et furtive, troublée seulement par la sirène et les avions.

Montmartre reste grouillant ; le dimanche il y a foule autour du forain qui soulève la barre truquée de 150 kgs. Les noirs, les filles et les maquereaux sont en place, mais ceux-ci ont remplacé le commerce de cocaïne par celui du jambon ou de la pièce d'étoffe.

Aujourd'hui, au « Moine défroqué », deux filles s'interpellaient par dessus ma tête. La plus âgée criait :

— « Moi, je n'ai pas peur, j'ai 56 ans, j'en ai fini avec le business et je leur dis merde aux Allemands. Toi si tu fais la douceuse, on le sait, c'est pour la peau de ton maquereau. »

Tel quel, le Parisien adore Paris. Moi qui reviens de New-York et de Londres, je reconnais qu'il n'y a pas une capitale au monde où il y ait autant d'intimité entre le sujet et l'objet. Aujourd'hui, on apprend à connaître mieux les quartiers et leurs détours qu'aux temps révolus de la vitesse. L'ouïe et l'odorat, débarrassés de tant de bruits et d'odeurs, sont sensibles aux rumeurs et aux parfums les plus effacés : l'odeur de la Seine, de l'asphalte, des marronniers ; la vibration d'un métro sous vos pieds au carrefour d'une rue, l'agitation soudaine que cause aux stations, autour des guichets, l'irruption d'une trentaine de policiers, qui tâtent vos corps, vérifient vos identités et escamotent un ami.

Le seul spectacle, la seule agitation qui semble n'intéresser jamais le Parisien, est celle de l'occupant. Il reste plus attentif à la fleur parisienne qu'au champignon étranger. Et le mendiant qui joue sur sa boîte à musique : « O mon Amour, à toi toujours... », attire mieux l'attention que les soldats de plomb de l'armée d'occupation en train de photographier la Tour Eiffel et l'Obélisque ou en train de faire leur relève aux Champs Elysées.

Deux fois aujourd'hui, à deux points cardinaux, un homme et une femme ont cessé leur conversation abruptement, comme je passais trop près. Arnaud, que j'aime tant, parce qu'il est fanatique et prudent, loyal et rusé, et que la tête ne lui a pas tourné d'avoir monté l'évasion la plus célèbre de Paris, me dit sur un ton lugubre : — « C'est comme cela qu'on se fait prendre... en s'arrêtant au milieu de ses phrases. »

JEUDI

Justine entre chez moi après avoir frappé les trois coups du régisseur. Malgré la saison, elle est vêtue d'une de ses robes en dentelle noire qui la font ressembler à une danseuse espagnole dans un mauvais film.

— « Sully a été fusillé hier matin. »

C'était couru, il était entre les mains des Allemands depuis un mois. Depuis qu'il avait monté son affaire de sabotages, il me répétait : « C'est passionnant, mais je n'en sortirai pas. » Bien que la nouvelle fût attendue, j'ai senti cette angoisse au creux de l'estomac

qui vous met le poil debout, et tandis que Justine ajoutait : « J'espère qu'il aura revu, avant, le soleil », j'ai imaginé son dernier silence vivant. Il était rageur, pur et renfermé. Ennemi des cris et des chants, il a dû marmotter : « Je suis fait, mais j'en ai vu assez pour savoir qu'ils sont foutus. »

Et il a dû se désespérer de n'avoir pas fini le tome II de son ouvrage sur les noumènes, car il était aussi professeur de philosophie.

Justine et moi, nous déjeunons au « Bifteck Pommes Frites », où il n'y aura aujourd'hui ni frites, ni bifteck, mais une compagnie sans danger. Sa présence me met à l'aise. Elle donne à tous l'impression que je suis en bonne fortune.

Au coin de la rue Fontaine, piaffant sur ses sabots de bois et pour couper court à la mélancolie par une constatation technique, elle décide : « Demain il faudra changer d'air, on a assez vu votre tête d'hidalgo et ma robe de tulle dans cette campagne... »

VENDREDI

Madame Feston, la vieille dame qui m'héberge, s'accommode du danger d'un air si imperieux que le danger semble la respecter. (C'est ce que Nef, qui pratiquait avec moi le sport de s'envoler de France appelle la « Baraka » ce n'est pas un si mauvais système cette « Baraka, » comme la méthode Coué, on finit par y croire et quand la mort vient — comme elle vient tout de même — on oublie que la « Baraka » a fait faillite, tout ébloui que l'on est sans doute par l'envers des choses, qui vous éclabousse soudain comme un soleil.)

Madame Feston, qui en 1941 a monté une entreprise de faux papiers, a abandonné le métier quand tout son monde fut pris et envoyé à Fresnes. Son assurance et son impudence de vieille dame ont dû en imposer à la Gestapo, et « ils » l'ont relâchée. Depuis, elle a fait si hautement profession de se consacrer aux sarcasmes les plus imprudents, que la Gestapo et les brigades spéciales, lassés de ses intempérances de langage, ont fini par renoncer aux interrogatoires et par la considérer comme une vieille folle inoffensive.

Quand je me levai ce matin-là, je la trouvai accoudée à son balcon du 5ème, plus attentive à sa rue du Chevalier de-la-Barre qu'aux effets paronomiques parisiens. Son silence était inhabituel et, dans sa robe de chambre, elle ressemblait à un vieux chat étique en arrêt devant une souris.

— « Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ? — »

— « Mes petits camarades sont là. »

— « Lesquels ? — »

— « Ces messieurs de la Gestapo qui m'ont interrogée : vous voyez la voiture noire, le grand au panama était le plus mauvais. Je me demande s'ils vont entrer ici... »

Sa curiosité de vieille portière étouffait en elle tout sentiment de panique ou toute idée concernant ma sécurité. Il y avait pourtant dans la maison un lot de papier qui représentait un très fort multiple de 12 balles.

Je sentis moi-même immédiatement des gouttes de sueur froide couler de mes aisselles le long des côtes, mais c'est la haine soudaine que j'eus de cette vieille dame inhumaine qui me permit de garder mon sangfroid. Le balcon nous cachait les mouvements des deux hommes dans la rue, et pendant quelques minutes je me suis repris à compter, suivant mon habitude en multiples de trois, pour découper le temps qui allait s'écouler jusqu'à ce que l'ascenseur se mît en marche.

C'est Mme Feston qui rompit le charme en se tournant vers moi pour me dire d'un ton aigre-doux : « Vous avez encore laissé l'électricité allumée dans la salle de bain...si cela continue, je vais être coupée à la fin du mois...»

A la fenêtre, Paris était bleu, gris, vert et blanc. L'ange en pénitence avait le regard absent, indifférent au butor. Il attendait son réveil pour devenir démon et secouer sa vermine.

SAMEDI

Bien qu'il ne soit pas dix heures du soir, il n'y a pas un café ouvert à un kilomètre à la ronde.

L'obscurcissement est tel que je marche les mains en avant comme un aveugle. A L'Etoile, pour trouver Wagram en partant de Kléber je compte les chaussées : Iena, Marceau, Champs-Élysées, Friedland. Quelques ombres, comme des mouches, restent agglutinées au métro Wagram, qui est toujours comme autrefois le métro des attentes. Mais ce n'est plus la foire aux rendez-vous d'amour ou de prostitution, ce sont des attentes frappées de mystère et d'ennui.

En bas, autour des guichets, il y a la Feldgendarmérie, les jambes écartées. Et puis, à l'accès aux quais, des inspecteurs. Je passe sans encombre, mais derrière moi le filet se referme sur d'autres. Avec tant de discrétion, si peu de mots, que l'histoire a l'air d'une pantomime.

A minuit, au couvre-feu, les dernières ombres s'effacent dans les angles. Le feu est couvert : il couve sous la cendre. Et, tandis que les Allemands cherchent la nuit de Paris, à la Brasserie du Tyrol aux Champs-Élysées, et à la Vie en Rose rue de Clichy, de La Villette à Malakoff et de Vincennes à Saint-Denis, une araignée tisse sa toile dont les fils couvrent la France, et où iront s'empêtrer les mouches vertes.

Et les chats qui voient la nuit sont les seuls à reconnaître que l'ange est un démon.

SICKERT

BY CLIVE BELL

At my preparatory school we learnt by heart a little poem called *The Chameleon*, the moral of which was, as you might guess, 'Remember others see as well as you.' Those who write or talk about Sickert would do well to bear this poem in mind; for those who knew him intimately, or at any rate saw him frequently and talked with him during thirty years or more, could never feel sure that their Sickert was Sickert's Sickert, or that Sickert's Sickert corresponded with any ultimate reality. Only the pictures were there to prove that a temperament, with an eye and a hand, called Sickert or Walter Sickert or Richard Sickert or Walter Richard Sickert existed and throughout a long development from Whistlerian days to the last could be recognised. If only the excellent Dr. Emmons had understood this, his not very good book *The Life and Opinions of Walter Richard Sickert* might have been better; but I doubt Dr. Emmons is of those who never so much as surmised that chameleons change colour. 'The opinions of Walter Richard Sickert,' what were they? They boxed the compass between a first and a third glass of wine. Sickert was a chameleon, and the most I hope to suggest is some plausible explanation of the fact.

Sickert was a *poseur*: he belonged to an age of *poseurs*, the age of Wilde and Huysmans and Whistler. If, to be an artist, it was not absolutely necessary to *épater les bourgeois*, it was necessary to do so in order to be reckoned one in the best circles. And it was in the best artistic and intellectual circles that Sickert was admired. In London, at the beginning of the century, his position was remarkable and, I think, enviable. He was not a popular artist but he was esteemed. English people of intelligence and culture, whose culture was mildly cosmopolitan and more or less up to date, had to have an English painter to admire, and whom could they have but Sickert? That he was their best may have counted for something: more to the purpose was the fact that he was neither Victorian nor precisely Edwardian, neither stodgy nor stupid nor quite respectable. Also, at that time, he was not provincial. He was a good European, a man of the great world, and well enough mannered to have taken a minor part in a novel by Henry James. He was extremely good and interesting looking: he was thoroughly presentable: and he was an actor. Never forget—Sickert never let one forget—that his earliest passion and profession was the stage.

Possibly it is significant that I met Sickert first, not in a studio, but in Bedford Square, lunching with Mrs. Prothero. That must have been about the year 1907; but already I had heard a great deal about

him and had seen his pictures, not in London, but in Paris. I met him often during the first Fitzroy period, the period of Saturday afternoon tea-parties and discreet advertisements in the *Westminster Gazette*; and got to know him, or so it seemed, at the time of the first Post-Impressionist exhibition (1911-12). His behaviour in that affair was characteristic. Naturally the art of Cézanne, still more the art of Matisse and Picasso, was to him unsympathetic. It was, or seemed at the moment to be, a challenge to his own and to that of his masters; for in 1911, I am ashamed to say, to many of us post-impressionist meant anti-impressionist. Though Sickert never understood Cézanne, he was much too intelligent not to perceive that the Post-Impressionists were far superior to the pets of their enemies. Characteristically, he made the best, or worst, of both worlds. He jeered at Roger Fry (Rouchaud recalls having once asked him why he kept a peculiarly idiotic German picture on his mantelpiece and having received for answer 'pour emmerder Fry') and at the same time poked fun at the self-appointed defenders of orthodoxy, for instance, at Mr. Henry Halliday and Sir Philip Burne-Jones. I seem to remember a letter by him in reply to one of the latter's intemperate outbursts beginning—'Let us see if Philip can be a little gentleman.' Sickert was fond of cracking jokes, some of them not bad, at my expense, which did not prevent him, when I published my first book—largely inspired by the exhibition of which he disapproved and to some extent a paean in praise of Cézanne—from publishing a long and flattering account of it in the *New Age*. Needless to say this friendly article by a friend was studded with disobliging quips. That is the sort of thing good Dr. Emmons cannot quite understand; but understood it must be if we are to get a notion of Sickert.

He was a *poseur* by choice; he was naughty by nature and he never ceased to be an actor. In order not to be disconcerted and misled one had to know what part at any given moment he had cast himself for. One day he would be John Bull and the next Voltaire; occasionally he was the Archbishop of Canterbury and quite often the Pope. He was an actor in all companies and sometimes a buffoon. He would dress up as a cook, a raffish dandy, a Seven Dials swell, a book-maker, a solicitor, or an artist even. And the disguise generally worked—*épaté-d* I mean: only—so the story goes—when he went over to Paris to see the Manet exhibition in the Tuileries dressed up as one of the gentlemen in that master's *Musique aux jardins des Tuileries* did the performance fall flat. That was a Parisian experience to which he never referred. Also he was a rake amongst the scholars and a scholar amongst the rakes, or rather, though a rake he was in so far as a hard-working man who takes his job seriously can be, a man of deep learning in Fitzroy Street and at Cambridge little better than a dunce. Partly, I suppose, through his first wife, née Cobden, he had rubbed shoulders

with what are called 'the Intellectuals,' and so quick a man had soon picked up from them a smattering of history, politics and science. Unlike most painters he was not wholly unfamiliar with ideas. 'Le peintre,' said Degas, 'en général est bête,' and he might have added 'ignorant.' Sickert would have been a clever man in any company, clever enough to appear to know a great deal more than he did. He had attended lectures at King's College, and, I believe, passed the London University matriculation examination; so we may credit him with all the erudition these facts imply. But he was not what people in studios and cafés believed him to be: he was not a scholar. He was fond of quoting, and misquoting, Latin tags in and out of season, and was not unwilling that his hearers should conclude that he was in the habit of reading Horace with his feet on the fender. I fancy he had dipped into a good many books in different languages; but it was noticeable that those which lay about in his studios remained where they lay for months and years. French and French slang he knew remarkably well. He could read Goldoni's Venetian plays in the original, but I am not sure that he ever did—all through. I dare say he could speak German before he could read English. Certainly I remember how, one evening during the last war, when he was dining in the Café Royal with Sir Max Beerbohm, Mrs. Hutchinson and me, he burst into such a torrent of German jokes and German songs that Sir Max—at least so it seemed—grew slightly uneasy. It was that evening, after Sir Max had gone home, that he insisted on showing us his 'studios'—'my drawing studio,' 'my etching studio,' etc. The operation involved chartering a cab and visiting a series of small rooms in different parts of London. These, as even in those days there was a 'black out' of sorts, had to be visited by match-light—the windows of course being blindless—and by match-light the works of art were inspected. Of one of them, a drawing of a woman with long hair hanging in a plait to the waist, I happened to say that I had known and admired the model, whereupon Sickert insisted on my taking it, as a gift, there and then, observing 'when a man's had a lech on a girl he has a right to her picture'. Next day, when we were more ourselves, I persuaded him to accept half the price he would normally have asked, and for five pounds became possessor of a little masterpiece.

Sickert was not a scholar, neither do I think he was a very good writer. Nevertheless, reading Dr. Emmon's book I discovered that his serious criticism and advice are far more interesting and better expressed than I had supposed. It would be well if these serious pieces could be collected and published in a single volume. But if it is on his letters to the papers that his fame as a writer and a wit is to rest, then it will hardly survive the shock of these letters being re-read. For, to be frank, those famous letters, especially the later ones, while flaunting an air of profundity combined with scintillating snappiness, are as often

as not silly, incoherent, beside the point and ungrammatical. Obviously he modelled his controversial style on Whistler's : a dangerous model, for Whistler was a born and reckless writer. As he grew older his communications to the editor of *The Times* became more incoherent and more frequent and at last suffered the crushing humiliation of being relegated to small print.

In no sense was Sickert a scholar ; for, if his acquaintance with books was scrappy, his acquaintance with pictures was not much better. By his own account he used to visit the National Gallery as a boy, and as a young man we must suppose he went sometimes to the Louvre. For my part, I never met him in either ; but once I went with him to the National Gallery—for a moment, after lunch—and it was clear he did not know his way about the rooms. Almost always it is instructive to look at old masters in the company of a good painter. The only picture that seemed to hold Sickert's attention was a Canaletto, and what impressed him was the ingenious way in which the master had managed a transition from the tone of a chimney-pot to that of the circumambient atmosphere. Sickert was the last of the great Impressionists. But even in the Impressionists he took only a limited interest. He took an interest in them in so far as their art unmistakably impinged on his own. Artistically, he belonged to a small clique—a clique determined by topography rather than the bounds of the spirit. Nothing that happened within five hundred yards of Mornington Crescent or Fitzroy Square, as the case might be, was indifferent to him. A rumour that Robinson of Rathbone Place had invented a new method of rendering rime on park palings filled him with excitement not unmingled with dismay. What had been done in Florence in the fifteenth century and what was doing in Paris in the twentieth left him cold, though, in the case of Florence, deferent. He had no standards. He acquired a mass of junk from a little place round the corner and persuaded himself that it consisted mainly of paintings by Tintoretto. 'Whom else can it be by?' he would query with an impressively knowing air. Whom, indeed? always supposing that it was Venetian work of the period. For if it was not by Giorgione or Titian or Veronese only by Tintoretto could it be, since Sickert would hardly have recalled the names of other Venetian painters of the sixteenth century. But 'the work of such imaginative painters as Veronese, or, in our own time and country Leighton, Watts or Poynter . . .' (*The Times*, 3 July, 1913) may suffice to give the measure of his connoisseurship.

My admiration for Sickert's painting is, I hope, fairly well known. I have expressed it in many places at different times ; and if Sickert did me the honour of treating me as a friend it was, I surmise, because he was well aware of it. I consider him the greatest British painter since Turner and almost as much above Whistler as below Degas.

But I do not think he had genius. He had a great deal of talent, but, unless I mistake, less natural gift than some of his inferiors. What he had besides talent (some I know hold that his extraordinarily sure sense of tone did amount to genius) was intellect, perseverance and a grand training. For, when all insignificant niceties have been brushed aside, it is clear that Sickert acquired his technique and his discipline in the France of the 'eighties, and to find a time and place in which the art of painting was pursued and studied with at once such ardour, integrity and intelligence we must go back to the Florence of the fifteenth century. He learnt a good deal from Whistler and had the courage to forget the greater part of it; but he never forgot what he learnt from Degas. Foreign blood may have made it easier for him than it appears to be for most British painters to take his art seriously: hereditary also may have been his power of application. It was because he was both intelligent and disciplined that he never attempted to stray beyond his limits: and Sickert was limited. 'One's pictures are like one's toenails,' he once said to me, 'they're one's own whether they're on or off.' I do not find the observation extraordinarily profound: it is characteristic in having a specious air of profundity and memorable as showing that he was at any rate willing to have it believed that to him his pictures were part of himself: also I doubt whether he felt as possessively and affectionately about anything which was not part of himself. His art he took seriously. Not quite seriously towards the end, maybe, when he took to making those comic transcripts of Victorian illustrations. That was Sickert playing the fool. And he played it so heartily and with so good a grace outside his art that one cannot but regret he should ever have played it within. However, these facetiæ found their billets: they pleased certain ladies of fashion and amateurs who had taken to Sickert late in life; so now they hang in appropriate places, *dulce et decorum est*, as Sickert himself might have put it, *desipere in loco*.

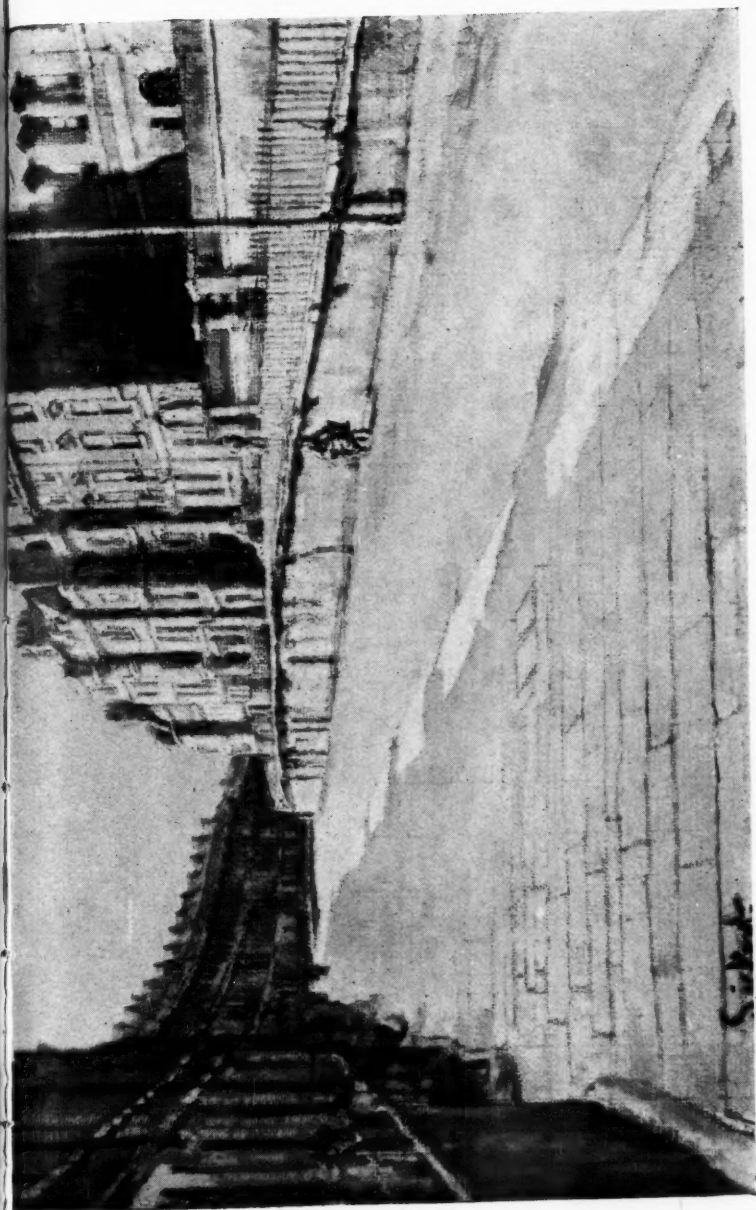
Anyhow, let us agree that Sickert was a great painter and completely sincere. Outside his art he was an actor, a buffoon sometimes, and a delightful companion. His buffoonery, a little trying perhaps in the funny titles he gave his pictures, became in his later public utterances distressing. That famous speech at Sadler's Wells is not a thing of which his more fastidious admirers will wish to be reminded. He liked 'showing off.' About half of what he said and wrote and nothing of what he painted—except some of those 'Echos'—was meant to startle. His feeble jokes and many of his judgments were to show how unlike he was to other men. For similar reasons he was in the habit of lighting that end of a cheroot which most people put in their mouths, and of shaving or not shaving. His extravagances, his practice of breakfasting at railway stations or of keeping a taxi ticking at one of his front doors the best part of the day, his unpaid tradesmen

and overpaid waiters were all means to the same end. So, to some extent, may have been that trick of sending for a dealer and giving him a corded bale of canvasses in return for a handful of notes. But I am far from being convinced that Sickert was a bad man of business. Like Mr. Hutton, he believed in low prices and a big turn-over. He would have argued, with elaborate and affected cynicism, that, if an artist has a studio full of pictures, it is better for him to sell fifty a year at twenty pounds apiece than two at two hundred. 'Affected,' I say, because I am certain that the deep and unavowed motive was not financial. Sickert sold his pictures cheap, and gave them away too, because he liked to think of Sickerts being looked at by as many people as possible. The more Sickerts in circulation the better, he thought : and so do I.

The biographer who one day will attempt a full-length portrait of Sickert, of Sickert with all his gifts and his absurdities, his contradictions and his charm, will have to realise—I repeat and am sorry to repeat it—that Sickert was a *poseur* besides being a great painter. Also he may discover, perhaps with mild surprise, when he has to explain so many inexplicable sayings and doings and give shape to a mass of refractory data, that at bottom Sickert was a solid, middle-class Englishman. There—he may say—there, but for the grace of God, or the wonders of science, went a Victorian paterfamilias. It is true that Sickert felt most of the respectable feelings though he generally succeeded in hiding them. When he called Albert the good he meant it. He was genuinely shocked when a married picture-dealer of his acquaintance eloped with his secretary, and vexed with me because I was not. 'It isn't done,' he said—I can swear to his very words : but there he was wrong. When some young painters and students, mainly out of a sense of inferiority I surmise, took to pilfering in Fitzroy and Charlotte Street, he warned the shop-keepers, and warned the young thieves that he would tell the police ; for he felt the sacredness of the rights of property instinctively as a citizen should. In fact, he was a sound conservative—or liberal—and would have endorsed most of his eminent ex-father-in-law's opinions had he been familiar with them. One need not take very seriously his pronouncements in favour of the Fascist or Nazi systems ; so far as I know he came out with them only when someone was about likely to rise to that bait. But it is on printed record that he felt no pity at all for the blameless Ethiopians and no moral indignation against Mussolini. Sickert frequented men and women of all kinds, not only pimps and prostitutes, fish-wives and scavengers, but the less picturesque classes too—shop-keepers, officers of the merchant marine, solicitors, county-court judges and politicians. He was amused by all sorts and conditions of men and in his way took an interest in them : but he did not love them. If he was not a Fascist, he, like everyone who has anything to do that requires fine thought,

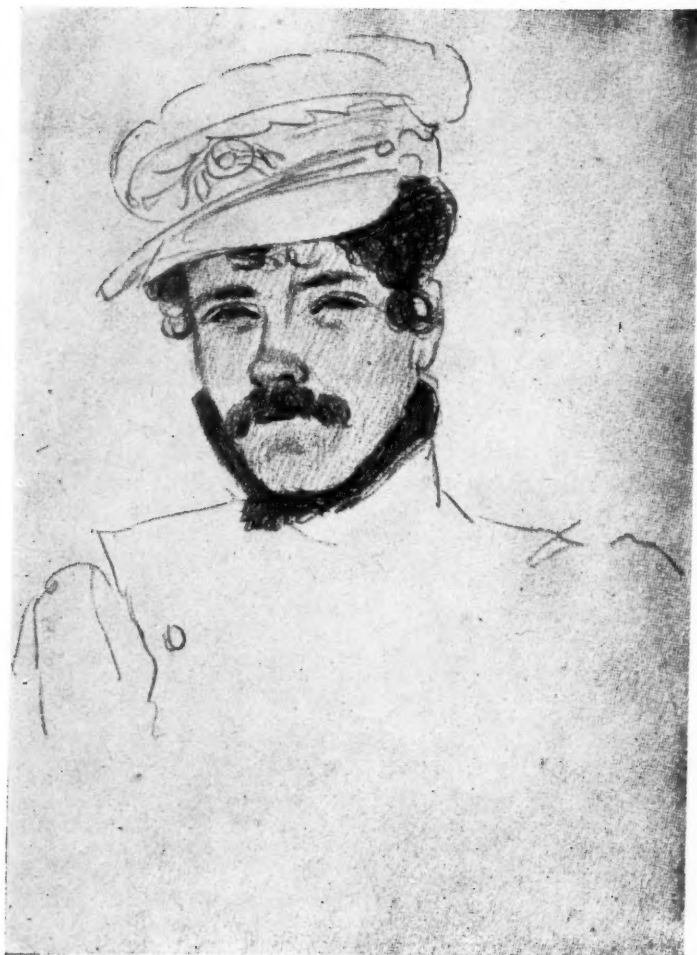
great skill and continuous effort, detested disorder. Yet, being an artist, he was necessarily something of an anarchist and a bit of an aristocrat : at all events, he was an anti-panisocrat, and I think he would have liked the word. Better than most he knew that all men are not equal ; and I can imagine few things he would have cared for less than a classless society. Uniformity is not a dish to set before an artist : Sickert loved variety—variety in all things, in men, and women too, clothes, food, manners, ways of life. For that *καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός* of popular philosophers, the common man, he had no respect whatever, he regarded him as a means ; and, mocking our Radio Platos, he would, as likely as not, have referred them and their idol to that Authority which recommends us to learn and labour truly to get our own living and to do our duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call us.

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W. SICKERT : THE PARAGON, BATH

From the collection of G. V. Miskin, Esqre. By kind permission of the Leicester Galleries.



E. DELACROIX : SELF-PORTRAIT

EUGÈNE DELACROIX

BY JOHN RUSSELL

Delacroix preferred in general to deal with things rather than with people. 'Tous les hommes,' he once remarked, 'sont ennuyeux : les tics, etc.' He himself had no tics to speak of, and nobody found him boring. His physical envelope was startlingly fine, and he was exceptionally well able to please in society ; nothing less, after all, could be expected of a son of Talleyrand. Yet even as a very young man he had been solitary, and in later life he turned from western life, as if in disappointment, and read eagerly all that was then known of more primitive types. Tartars and Iroquois, Sandwich Islanders and Iowa Indians—each was more curious than the last. He loved to scavenge among travellers' tales and read of the Patagonians, for instance, that they were covered with a thick layer of filth and 'd'une perfidie achevée.' It is, in fact, a paradox that anyone so sceptical of human progress should be usually associated with such pious and ideal conceptions as 'La Liberté de 1830.' A more representative subject, and one to which he returned again and again, is that of Tasso in prison, tormented by idiots and criminals.

Four spectral lines of Baudelaire are often taken to contain the whole of Delacroix :

Delacroix, lac de sang hanté des mauvais anges,
Ombragé par un bois de sapins toujours vert,
Où, sous un ciel chagrin, des fanfares étranges
Passent comme un soupir étouffé de Weber.

Taken point by point, these lines are tolerably exact. There is decidedly a lot of dirty weather in his work ; as a young man he confessed that he had in his heart 'un fond tout noir à contenter' ; at least one memorable event happened to him during the overture to *Freischutz* ; and the mortality among his figures is so abnormally high that the words 'molochist' and 'cannibal' have been coupled with his name. These things did, in fact, go very deep ; one cannot read his description of Arab horses fighting, and not sense that it had for him a compulsive and symbolic interest. 'Ils se prennent à belles dents comme des tigres et rien ne peut les séparer ; les souffles rauques et enflammés qui sortent de leurs naseaux écarlates, leurs crins épars ou empâtés de sang . . .' ; this is clearly obsessional, and it is in character that when he was walking on the beach at Tangier the marks left on the sand by the retreating tide seemed to him like those which he had seen on the back of a tiger. He

went to great pains to trace a Persian painting in which there was 'un crocodile colossal'; so fond was he of these adjuncts to disaster that any form of statistic about unnatural death would always find a place in his diary. Twelve persons, he noted, were hanged every day in Constantinople; British merchant marine losses, for the first seven months of 1858, totalled over 960; even the eating of mussels had been known, said the *Courrier du Havre*, to have fatal results. A florilegium of this kind could be continued, but at the expense of proportion. Delacroix insisted always that an artist should be sufficiently of his time to use means which were known to it; he was in his example a romantic artist, with all the sensationalism of lust, extravagance and death which this phrase calls to mind. It is thus the more remarkable that in precept, and in his letters and journal, he should have honoured the great classical tradition of France; and that while other romantic leaders died violently or fell into some dismal routine of abandon, Delacroix remained by his own fireside and read aloud from *Athalie* to his old servant.

Frenchmen are naturally of a deductive and aphoristic turn, and love to reduce all knowledge to a set of maxims. Delacroix had his full share of this trait. 'C'est un don ou un défaut de notre race,' he said, 'il faut que l'esprit s'y mêle de tout.' His intellectual history is of the first interest to all who care for that classical tradition which remains, as Gide once said, 'a school of design for Europe and the whole world.' It is a history of progress from particular to universal tenets. All young writers and artists feel that they and their friends, by their very existence, are filled with a kind of innocent power; this is typified for instance in the lines of Charles Cros:

Paul Fort, Vildrac, Ponchon, Derême,
Quel joli bruit font ces noms-là !

Delacroix as a young man had feelings of this kind. He enjoyed his friends and liked to dazzle them by wearing suits of English cut; all things, from eating ices to bawling out an ensemble from *Figaro*, were best enjoyed in company. As a good romantic, he made almost a fetish of impulse; 'je n'aime point la peinture raisonnable,' he would cry. Yet even at twenty Horace was one of his favourite poets, and it is in the steady recession of the romantic ideal that the fascination of his journal lies. It is as if he believed himself to be, as Racine had been, a romantic for his own time, but for all others the very image of the classical idea.

He began, for instance, as a rabid anglophile. Bonington and Copley Fielding were his friends, and from Constable he learned that first principle of colour which underlies the dazzling assurance of his tonality. He read a great deal, and has probably a wider and more vivid appreciation of writing than any other great painter.

His first self-portrait was in the character of a hero from Scott ; he was among the first French enthusiasts for *Vanity Fair* ; he translated passages from Addison ; above all he revered Shakespeare. He had seen Kean in London ; and the visit in 1828 of an English company to Paris was for him an apotheosis of Pleasure. 'Othello prépare,' he wrote to Victor Hugo, 'son poignard essentiellement occiseur et subversif de toute bonne police dramatique.' Though later he felt bound to say that Shakespeare's was not a good example for other writers, he was held to the last by the audacity, the astounding nonchalance of his execution. There at least was something beyond analysis. England itself was disappointing. He never liked travelling north of Paris ; in Brussels even the trees sat awkwardly ; in the Rhineland there was too much Gothic and people spoke an expressionless jargon. In England there were admitted compensations. The shops of London were wonderfully fine ; church parade was memorable for its *éclat* ; and Delacroix, as a true kinsman of Rissener and d'Oeben, could not but admire the skiff in which he rowed down to Richmond—it was like 'un violon d'amateur.' Outside the world of rank and fashion, however, surly and hippophagous goddams glowered at every corner, and among the lower classes there was 'quelque chose de sauvage et de feroce, qui est hideuse.' Even a certain lady, with whom he was much taken, had atrocious rheumatism and could hardly move her arms or legs. He preferred in short to know the race at one remove—to read about Fox rather than to endure at table or in a railway carriage 'la morgue singulière de ces automates d'argent.' Corruption alone kept the British constitution going, and as for our literature—he declared in middle life that 'the English and the Germans, like all anti-Latin peoples, can have no literature, simply because they have no idea of taste or proportion. The most promising subjects become wearisome in their hands.' One had always to count on 'le mauvais goût des étrangers.' Even Courbet's forest-lurking torsoes, which Delacroix regarded as antipodean to art, had not this capital fault.

It is typical of Delacroix that although he might himself be called an atrocity-painter, he deplored in others the tendency to regard terror as an end in itself. Poe, he thought, went on too long ; Monk Lewis had only a feeble talent and did not know how to conserve it. In this, of course, he flouted a grand Romantic canon ; but as he grew older he allowed one after another of the great sources of romantic fever silently to run dry. Politically, for instance, he recognised the values of the great world and did not care to see them overthrown ; 1830 had been an inspiration, but 1848 was a year 'of barricades and false patriotism.' Early in 1849 he was shocked to see the Palais-Royal and the Tuileries in use as common playgrounds and reeking with 'les odeurs de la pipe et du caserne.' By 1857

he had come even to detest the invention of railways, on the score that they encouraged restlessness among artisans. In society he maintained an inviolable reserve ; 'il se tient enveloppé,' said one observer, 'comme le python des galeries zoologiques.' Over the natural vehemence of his character he had achieved an absolute dominion ; other romantics would, in fact, have welcomed an occasional outburst on their behalf, but Delacroix did not care to impose his views upon stray acquaintances ; only oafs, or persons from Quimper behaved so. He never tired of recalling the perfection of tenue with which Talleyrand had overcome his enemies, and in public he gained in opacity from year to year. In private, however, his judgments became increasingly harsh. Hugo, for instance, had been his friend and associate ; yet he came to regard his work as 'le brouillon d'un homme de talent ; il dit tout ce que lui vient.' It is a true symptom of his change of heart that he came to feel more in sympathy with Stendhal than with Victor Hugo ; Stendhal at least understood what for Delacroix had become a first principle of the artist's life—the necessity of not saying everything that came into one's head. 'Ce qu'il faut sacrifier,' ran one of his notes '—grand art que connaissent pas les novices. Ils veulent tout montrer.' Even Balzac, by this standard, was indicted as a novice. 'Le génie même,' said Delacroix at the climax of his evolution, 'n'est que le don de généraliser et de choisir.' In this way, running always before one strong set wind of the heart, an artist might hope to improve to the very end of his life. Titian's 'largeur de faire' at the end of his career often seemed to Delacroix the perfection of painting, and he took many notes of those who seemed to him admirable in this way. Turenne, for instance, each of whose campaigns was more audacious than the last ; Rachel who, as she grew older, 'augmenta de fougue, d'ardeur et de violence' ; and Gluck, the painters' composer, who broke new ground in his seventh decade.

Delacroix did not think that, any very wide general education was necessary to an artist. There were exceptions to this, but in general three attributes of a great painter were in themselves sufficient occupation for a lifetime—'la justesse de l'œil, la sûreté de la main, et l'art de conduire un tableau de l'ébauche jusqu'à la complétion.' He himself had none of these in the highest degree. His eye was rarely quite true ; his hand had never the final assurance of the greatest masters ; and although he could admirably enumerate the stages by which a picture was brought to perfection, his example fell always far short of his precept. In the National Gallery last year a sketch for his *Sardanapalus* held its own among many great French pictures of the nineteenth century ; the finished picture could not have done the same. In his sketches he caught something of Rubens' sense of grand design ; even to read his notes upon Rubens

would set his mind on fire for work. 'J'aime son emphase,' he once cried, 'j'aime ses formes outrées et lâchées.' Even the hippopotamus ('bête informe qu'aucune exécution ne pourrait rendre supportable') could in Rubens' hands become the centre of a heroic composition. The quality of finish in technique interested him so much that even Meissonier seemed to him admirable in this sense. He thought endlessly about it; he noted that in his favourite Rossini 'l'Italien l'emporte—c'est à dire que l'ornement domine l'expression'; and his great love of the theatre suggested at one time that the practice of Talma or the Malibran might offer some fruitful analogy. It was the element of improvisation which finally defeated him; he could recognise it in others (the unbelievable nonchalance of Shakespeare was always in his mind), but in the grand scenas which he set himself to attempt he could never catch anything approaching it. His notebooks are full of sketches in a most delightfully easy, almost vernacular style; cats, flowers, Algerian landscapes and creatures of myth—he never paused, and one can readily believe that on his rare excursions into the world he would spend the evening happily drawing. Yet in his huge public pieces he had not that sense of inevitable design which is the mark of the great decorative artist; nothing, one senses, was ever quite as he intended. From 1835 until his death in 1863 he was largely occupied with enormous decorative schemes; the Chambre des Députés, the Luxembourg, the Galerie d'Apollon at the Louvre, and finally Saint-Sulpice. Delacroix was a fastidious man, and had kept his studio always at equatorial heat; his habits of work when young were spasmodic. It is thus the more remarkable that in middle age, when he was already seriously ill, he should have got up every morning at half-past five, travelled to Paris by the first of the antiquated puffers which plied between there and Champrosay, and worked through the hours of daylight at Saint-Sulpice. An observer remarks that his inspiration seemed never to flag; and if he felt the need of diversion, he would take up a guitar and play a few tunes—some of those, perhaps, which he had heard in Andalusia; he had always liked the jota and the seguidilla better than the 'insipid polka.' The conditions were far from ideal; he was ill paid, no adequate provision was made for the eventual display of the work, and in some cases the fabric of the building was so unsuited to decoration that cracks and fissures appeared even while he was working upon it. Yet even upon the *jour de l'an* he refused to take an hour's holiday: two years before his death he wrote to Georges Sand that 'rien ne me charme plus que la peinture et voilà que par-dessus le marché, elle me donne une santé d'homme de trente ans.' This passion for decoration sprang in part from his essentially literary turn; in the ceiling of the Palais Bourbon, for instance, he could perpetuate

that Stoical view of life which he believed to be just ; Pliny is shown engulfed by Vesuvius, Seneca kills himself at the will of a tyrant, St. John the Baptist is beheaded and the fair land of Italy is overrun by Attila. But one may suspect from a note made in 1847 that Delacroix turned to decoration in the hope of overcoming inhibitions which would always thwart him as an easel-painter. 'Véronèse,' he wrote, 'n'affiche pas, comme Titien par exemple, la prétention de faire un chef d'œuvre à chaque tableau. Cette habileté à ne pas *faire trop* partout, cette insouciance apparente des détails qui donne tant de simplicité est due à l'habitude de la *décoration*.'

Delacroix was by two years a man of the eighteenth century, and he came of solid agnostic and revolutionary stock. It was therefore natural that he should always have been tormented by the desire to formulate some binding moral law. Even the memory of his childhood was coloured by this ; 'I can well remember,' he said to Baudelaire, 'that as a child, I was a *monster*. A sense of duty is not easily acquired ; it is only by suffering, punishment and the progressive exercise of reason that man can slowly diminish his natural tendency to wickedness.' The first pages of his journal, written at the age of 24, are full of such reflections as this : 'all bodily passions are vile, but those of the soul are veritable cancers.' At this period he longed to believe ; the idea of chance as the prime governor of human affairs was repulsive to him. Delacroix loved the stretch and rebound of intense mental activity, and was in many ways in advance of his time. (He anticipated Sickert, for instance, in his habit of sketching from photographs.) But just as in painting he had launched himself backwards in order to take over the heroic and ornamental mode of Rubens, so in morality he sought to graft on to the orderly tradition of France the severe and discouraging decrees of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. The 'baroque idea of progress' appeared to him delusory. 'L'humanité,' he wrote in 1850, 'va au hasard, quoi qu'on ait pu dire.' Submission to natural law was the final lesson of all experience. For all this he was delighted by any organised attempt to raise the quality of human life ; the sight of nuns in an omnibus, for instance, would put him in good spirits for the rest of the day. Age, too, brought many consolations. He was over fifty before he saw swans in flight ; a magnolia tree in flower, or a maytime concert of birds seemed to him in his fifty-third year the greatest of human pleasures. He took to staying at Dieppe, where he could hear arias from *Orfeo*, pick mussels at low tide or watch a regiment of soldiers parading on the waterfront ; Touraine in November never disappointed him—'la campagne est bariolée de rubis, d'émeraudes, de topazes et de tout son luxe d'adieu.' He never married ; when he was young, a wife of his own calibre seemed to him the greatest of blessings, but he does not seem on the whole

to have been well equipped to find one. In middle life a brief and calamitous fugue to La Haye, in Belgium, disabused him for ever of any passionate attachment. He often quoted some passages from *La Chartreuse de Parme*, when speaking of the influence of women, but it is rather in *Armance* that the clue to his own experience may be found.

Delacroix was never entirely well, and he took extravagant precautions to maintain himself in health. One summer at Augerville a curious fellow-guest was startled to find in Delacroix's room innumerable sets of waistcoats, caps and scarves, each numbered and corresponding to possible changes of temperature. He never knew how to reconcile his passion for cigars with their appalling effect upon the system; this problem so occupied him that he would discuss it with strangers in trains and pursue it, trusting to Balzac's mania for instruction, into the darkest corners of *Les Paysans*. At one stage green-tea cigarettes were specially ordered from St. Petersburg. Wellington and Turenne, he noted, had lived to a great age in spite of their invalidism when young; for himself he prescribed a régime as strict as that of Voltaire. Even the nervous effort of talking to a deaf woman would set him off on a bronchial cold. All this does not seem to add up to a happy way of life; yet Delacroix accepted gladly the final loneliness of the not wholly successful artist, and the last entries in his journal are those of a man enjoying the full resources of an exceptionally active and noble mind. In public, moreover, the extreme beauty and distinction of his presence served to impress upon many young men and women the possibilities of human dignity. In reading, for instance, the account of Odilon Redon one is reminded of the impression left upon Macaulay by a meeting at Holland House with Talleyrand. At an official ball in 1859, Redon saw Delacroix; 'il était beau comme un tigre, même fierté, même finesse, même force. Une personne petite, aristocratique, il se tenait debout seule, devant une groupe de femmes assises dans le salon de la danse.' As the young men approached, Delacroix turned upon them with 'ce regard clignotant, unique, qui dardait plus vivement que les lustres.' He left early; they followed at a discreet distance, and were surprised to find that for hours he walked alone in the streets of Paris. He who had always detested 'les Schubert, les rêveurs, les Chateaubriand' could always enjoy in his own thoughts what he had never been quite able to sustain in his work—the inexhaustible beauties of the great classical tradition of France.

CAT UP A TREE

BY WILLIAM SANSOM

A wild, glassy morning—all winds and glitter . . . the sun glared low between the chimneys, through black winter branches, blinding you at a slant, dazzling white and bright straight in the eyes—it made a splintering dance of everything, it made for squints and sniggering. . . .

* Winds swept from nowhere, scooping up leaves and hustling them round the corner, knocking little dogs sideways, snatching and flapping at your trouser-legs. Cold nipped at noses and pinched ears red . . . it sang with cold in the keen bright light. Under a white sky the walls, roads, people, trees shone brightly coloured, red, green, blue, grey colours, as in a folk-tale, as if everything were made of coloured glass. Behind white cloud the sun hung and fiercely glowed, a monstrous incandescent mantle. A gentleman crossing the road moved like a puppet, parts of him glittering—one feared that by his own tread he might smash to smithereens his polished boots on the brittle macadam. . . .

Gentleman? He was no gentleman, he was a fireman. A jerky, puppety fireman, in blue trousers piped red, black jogging topboots, and in his braces and white sleeves. He carried a broom. He looked like a puppet because he was then crossing the road in the light—he walked so slowly against the hustling and swirling of the leaves, the dust, the winds, the shattering light.

Hindle Rice, alias Pudden, number sefenty-sefen-too-too-fife, going then through the big red door into the Appliance Room, white-tiled like a clean lavatory for motor-cars, where big top-heavy engines stood and waited, where now Pudden Rice would sweep together over the tiled floor a few small piles of dust, leaving these neat pyramids for the officers to see as they passed in their peaked caps, while in the shelter of such evidence of work proceeding Pudden Rice would for the rest of the morning lean on his broom and think or chat or smile to the good-mornings, or break-for-tea, or perhaps if he felt brave drop the precious broom altogether and abandon his alibi to collect and break up twigs for firewood for home.

Rice soon dropped the broom. Out in front of the station the black wintry twigs cracked and snapped in his hands. That sunlight caught his eyes, so he could see nothing in front but bright light, as of a halo; and to each side things moved too quickly and glittered like glass. A cat went dashing past, its fur ruffed forward by a following gust of wind. Up the street two navvies were hitting at a

metal spike with steel hammers—the blows came ringing on the wind like sharp bells distorted. An old woman in black scurried by with her veil blown fast into her teeth : she mouthed as this tickled under her nose, grimacing at Pudden Rice with her head tilted queerly to one side. Yet in a little garden opposite a girl sat reading, sheltered by a bush in a warm pocket of sunlight ! A paper bag sailed like a wingless pouter suddenly out from some trees and on over her head—then disappeared abruptly over the top of a bush. The girl waved at its shadow, as if it might have been a fly, and remained throughout reading unconcerned.

Rice smiled to see the girl sitting so quietly. Then he saw a pile of leaves on the pavement in front of him suddenly into single file, trickle round in a wide circle, then run for the shelter of a tree-trunk.

A window above banged open and a voice piped : ' Rice ! Rice ! '

Pudden dashed for his broom and then carrying it walked slowly to the stairs. He climbed the stone steps, circling with them the black-barred well down which hung long grey hose-lengths and ropes, and muttered to these shiplike hangings : ' Now what's the matter ? Now what's up ? I swept the tiles, didn't I ? I done my job ? '

He had reached the landing and was about to turn in through the green swing doors—when the whole station leapt alive with sound, sudden as a thunderclap, highpitched and vibrating for ever, flashing off the tiles, reverberating round the brass BRNNNNNNNG—the deafening alarm bell gripped in its electric circuit and ringing on and on for ever. . . .

Rice flung down his broom and dived through the swing doors. Across the room and into a passage—to a sudden end where two brass rails stood flanking a steel pole. Now the clatter of footsteps everywhere, and the alarm bell still jangling, Rice stamped his foot on a brass floorknob, a spring trap-door shot open upwards—and there was the hole ! He jumped over it and gripping the smooth steel pole disappeared flying down. A rubber mat at the bottom, and all around suddenly the Appliance Room's white tiles again, with the engine of the Pump already roaring, men scrambling into boots, and more coming sailing down the pole, on that lightheaded morning like a rain of heavy angels. But angels with funny faces—Nobby redhaired and pointed like a fox, Graetz with his comic round moon-face sprouting high up like a sunflower, Sailor with no neck and like John Bull washed white by a bad liver, Curly with his bright bald head, fairhaired Teetgen like a fresh blank Apollo with black teeth. These all came sliding down and scrambled for the Pump, Rice among them. He jumped up on to one of the high side seats and started to pull up his leggings. The automatic door flew open and the pump clanged out into the sunshine, as into a fog of white crystal, so that as they turned and roared off down the street light struck up from

each brass fitting and from the axes and the silver buttons—and somehow the heaviness was washed away.

Perched high up on the side, Pudden struggled into his coat. It flapped and blew out its short tails. He was just able to see the girl in the garden smile—and then his helmet fell down over his eyes. One legging flapped loose. The engine tore along, accelerating faster and faster, until it seemed to Pudden high up above the windshields that perhaps they had left the ground and were scudding through the air itself. The officer in front clanged the clapper of the brass bell as fast as a hand could move. Up England's Lane they tore, down Downshire Hill, through the Crescent, up Flask Walk, down Well Walk, sweeping along the middle of the wide roads like an angry brass beetle, roaring up the narrow streets and scattering dogs and cats and barrows and once an old lady carrying even in November a lilac parasol.

That morning the weather had made poets of the people. It sometimes happens—an angular trick of the sun, a warmth of a wind, something stirs an exultation in the most unexpected hearts. Not in the hearts of all the people ever, but sometimes in those ready to be stirred, and sometimes also in dull hearts of which this would never have been imagined; but these people too receive a sudden jerk, a prod in the spirit, a desire for more than they usually want. Memories arise of things that have never been, tolerance arrives. They laugh—but perhaps that is only because they are nervous at the odd look of things. A trick of the weather has transformed the street, the hour, life. Perhaps this trick is a more powerful agent than the liver or even the libido. Perhaps one day it will be agreed that finally the most critical words of all are—'good morning.'

The passers-by smiled, one waved his hat, and a middle-aged butcher brandished a chop at them. Pudden still struggled with his uniform—how it eluded him! The belt and axe caught in the hooks behind him, his round helmet kept falling over an eye, an ear—and once his foot missed its support on the running board and he nearly fell off the machine. He gripped the brass rail just in time. Yet, awkwardly as these things tugged at him—the wind, the clothes, the belt—he began to grin: 'What an odd engine—how peculiar that on most days it seems so heavy, so oiled and dully heavy with its iron extinguishers, its massive suction pipes, its hard wood ladders—yet to-day . . . all I can see about it is light, and how high it seems, how topheavy, and most striking of all are the brass rails and the red leather cushions! It's as upright as a queen's coach! And here we are—Nobby, Graetz, Teetgen, Sailor and me and the officer—all sitting and standing high up on top, like exuberant boy scouts, or tin soldiers, or travellers packed up on top of an old-fashioned coach! Ridiculous!'

But it was really so. The engine was built higher than cars are built usually, and brass rails armed the erect red leather seats, vestiges of the horse days, a tradition to be surrendered unwillingly.

The bare trees skidded past. Rows of front doors approached and receded, innumerable windows winked and flashed in the fierce glare. The skyline of roofs and chimneys stood out black, giantly as against a milkwhite sunset. Far off there appeared a church-spire, it grew into a pointed little church, into a large grey church, and then this too was gone, veering off to the left. At last Pudden got himself straight. He then stood up and faced the wind, one leg crouched up by the ladders. This made him feel a dashing fellow. Phlegmatic usually, this pose in the wind and this clinging to a precarious rail excited him, never failing to rouse in him old postures of bravado learnt from early adventure books. Then, in the sharp sunlight, with the little houses flashing by, he thought suddenly: 'Good Lord—we're going to a fire! Perhaps to a real fire! It may possibly be a false alarm pulled by a boy or a drunk or someone (He saw a sheet of figures—over 1,000 False Alarms Malicious last year—one of them fatal—a fireman was killed, crushed against the garage door in the rush for somebody's funny joke). But . . . perhaps it really is a fire, this one time, by chance the real thing? Asphyxia, boiling, frying—I saw a fireman frizzled up in burning oil till he was like a little black monkey, a charred little monkey wearing a tin hat several sizes too big for him. And when Sailor tripped in the molten rubber—his arm. Andy's neck after that sulphuric acid job. . . .'

Rice looked down at the two shining round helmets primping up in front of him. He laughed, and felt the corners of his mouth split and all the teeth catch in the wind, he laughed and seemed inside to shine with laughter; how could frying and falling walls happen on this kind of a glass morning? Hot smoke in this pure air? Such things happen to a rosy-cheeked crew of bright tin soldiers? The wind echoed in his ears like a seabreeze, thrumming past as regular as telegraph wires, and still the sun shot pinpoints off the brass and glared whitely from the chimney-tops ahead. Suddenly Pudden began to hum a march, a highpitched jiggling march for dwarfs stomping off to the forest and the anvils—as joyfully repetitive as train music. . . .

They skidded round a corner and braked to a stop. They were in a cul-de-sac made up of small white houses with painted doors. Trees growing behind showed above the roofs, an effect peculiar in a large city. These looked like country cottages, and the windows were in each case so cramped up and warped that the houses seemed to be no more than a pack of doors and windows clustered together, balancing for breath. A few trained bushes stood in tubs like sentinel

birds before the black and pink and primrose doors. And there on the pavement corner stood the fire alarm post, singular and red, as bright a red as when the snow is on the ground.

They leapt off the machine; the officer ran up to the alarm and then stood by it, looking right and left, uncertain, while the broken glass twinkled beneath his polished boots. Rice thought: 'Bright as the day Teetgen went to the paint factory fire and came away with his boots varnished, bright for days!'

The officer peered into the alarm—it had certainly been pulled. But no one was there to direct him. He looked up at the windows, then behind him—searching with his eyes anxiously for smoke. 'That's the crazy people they are,' thought Rice, 'pulling the bell and then running away expecting us to find the job by magic. That's them.'

A small boy appeared from behind one of the bird-bushes. The officer frowned and strode heavily towards him in his big boots.

'Well, son—and who pulled it?' He looked like a giant wooden soldier towering above the suddenly real boy. Blue coat splashed with red, silver buttons and axe, round red face as neat as a doll's, shining black leggings stiff-legged.

Ignoring the question, the boy said: 'Is there a fire, mister?'

'How long have you been here?' the officer asked, his voice sharpening with suspicion—then turned his head, so that his face shone brightly in the sunlight. He yelled over his shoulder to the firemen peering about: 'One of you—scout round the corner!'

Attracted by the sound of bells and brakes and the stamping of boots, there had by then collected a small crowd of onlookers. Half of these were boys, carrying rifles and swords, or driving small pedal cars. One wore on his head a top hat peaked with half a brim only, painted blue and labelled Free French. Two painters in white overalls looked sadly at the fire engine. A tall man with a thin face clouded with red veins asked if he could lend a hand. A smartly dressed woman dragging a trolley laden with shopping smiled and smiled, as though she was the mother of all and 'she knew.' A man in A.R.P. uniform winked at Teetgen, because *he* knew too—he knew it was just another bloody exercise, mate. Three Jewish refugees passed hurriedly, twisting their necks round to keep the uniforms in sight, frightened, round-eyed as owls.

By then Graetz, a tall white sunflower with his round face drooping off his long neck—Graetz was standing isolated in a circle of boys and saying aloud for their benefit: 'It's a false alarm—and from now on we've got our eye on this post. Got a policeman on it, we have, so in future . . .'

When suddenly in a garden wall between two houses a door burst open and a fat woman in a broad white apron came bustling out.

She ran towards the Pump with her arms outstretched, as though the Pump might at any moment recede and vanish. She began shouting as soon as she appeared: 'Don't go! Don't go! Oh, I'm so glad you came! Milly's up a tree.' Then paused for breath as the officer went up to her. 'It's round the back, round the back,' she panted, 'and I pulled the alarm, you see. They told me it was right—you see, she's been up there since last night. She mews so.'

The officer said, 'How do we get through?' And at the same time shouted back to the men, 'Cat up a tree. Bring the ladders.'

Teetgen and Nobby jumped up to the front of the ladders on top of the Pump. Graetz and Rice began to pull at the bottom. The straps uncoiled and then the long ladder came sliding out. Once again Rice felt like a puppet, a wooden soldier clockworked with the others into an excited, prearranged game. The sunlight seemed to blow by in bright gusts. Now everybody was laughing—except one of the lugubrious painters, who had a brother at sea, and who now grumbled loudly about the bleeding waste of petrol. But the other onlookers found it great sport, and in the laughing dazzling light began to shout: 'Pretty Pussy!' and 'Mind it don't bite you now!' and 'See you keep her nightdress down!'—this last from the thin man with the bad veins.

Pulling at the ladder Nobby said: 'Last week an old girl called us for a parrot up a tree. But we wouldn't go. Cat-up-a-tree's legal, parrots isn't.'

Now the fat woman in the apron bolted back through the garden door with the officer following. The four men carrying the ladder squeezed through at the double. Rice at the rear end nearly jammed himself between the brick wall and the heavy wooden ladder, catching his fingers in the extension pawl, nearly coming a cropper and laughing again. Then they were in the garden—apple-trees and young beech saplings, a black winter tracery of branches everywhere against the glowing white cloud beyond. The sun glared through this filigree, striping the litter of dry leaves, striping the air itself with opaque lightshafts.

'There she is, lads,' shouted the doll officer, pointing upwards. The other dolls doubled up with the ladder working like clockwork, raising their knees in a jocular movement as they ran.

Above them, isolated at the very top of a tall sapling, crouched on the tapering end of this thin shoot so that it bent over under the weight like a burdened spring—sat a huge dazed cat.

In a book of children's stories this cat would have seemed improbable and amusing. Its position was as improbable as that of a blue pig flying. It looked like a heavy young puma born by what appeared to be a tall and most resilient twig. In real life a branch so thin would have snapped. Yet here this was—happening on a bright

November morning, a real morning though rather lightheaded. In children's books too there are pictured with vivid meaning certain fantasies of the weather—lowering black storms, huge golden suns, winds that bend all the trees into weeping willows, skies of electric blue with stars dusted on them like tinsel, moons encircled by magical haloes. These appear highly artificial, drawn from the inspiration of a dreamland: but they are true. These skies and suns and winds happen quite frequently. So that on that morning what appeared to be unreal was real, apparently richened by association, but originally rich in its entity that had created the fairy association. Thus this was a witches' morning, a morning of little devils and hats popping off, of flurry and fluster and sudden shrill laughter.

Teetgen put his weight on the foot of the ladder and the others ran up underneath so that the ladder rose with them until at last it was upright. It was thicker by far and heavier than the sapling—but as its head crashed into the tapering sprout branches they supported it easily. They swayed precariously, then sprang back into position, while the cat, refusing to be disturbed by these alien perplexities, looked away scornfully—or, as animals often do, pretended to look away, keeping an ear cocked sharply towards the new varnished ladderhead now extending towards it.

The officer began to climb at the run, stamping on the ladder as firemen are taught to stamp, to punish the ladder and thus to control it. More than ever he appeared to be playing a game with this deliberate kicking of his boots. Pudden and the others held the ladder firm at the bottom. They were thinking: 'What if he breaks his neck? A man for a cat? What a life . . .' Through the rungs of the ladder a line of gaily coloured underclothes flapped and danced their strange truncated dances. The fat woman stood a little way off, chequered by sunlight, her hands clasped, talking all the time. Some birds started singing, and in the middle of the city a cock crowed.

The officer pranced to the top and picked off the cat by the scruff of its neck. He stuck it on his shoulder and climbed down. The crowd now jammed in the doorway cheered and whistled. They all wanted to stroke the cat. So did Pudden. But as the officer reached the bottom rung the cat jumped from his shoulder to the ground. It was a black cat, fully grown, with white whiskers and paws. As it collected itself on the ground, several of the firemen stretched down their free hands to stroke it, somehow to congratulate it also upon its narrow escape.

However the cat never even looked at them. With deliberation it stiffened its legs, so that it seemed to stand on its toes, flung up its tail straight as a poker—and walked disdainfully away from the firemen, leaving only the bright adieu beneath its tail.

By the time they had reached the station again the cloud had thickened. Beneath this new low blanket the winds had died and the air had grown dull.

Pudden jumped off the machine and looked across to the girl in the garden, ready to smile and perhaps shout across to her what they had done. But she had gone indoors.

As they backed the pump into the Appliance Room an officer walked through and said that no coal had been delivered—it would be a cold day inside, no fire in the messroom, an empty grate littered with cigarette ends as after some night before. Nobby said: 'Firemen! And not even a bleeding fire we can call our own.'

The white tiles looked dull, clean, solid and efficient. This was again an engine-room for engines, smelling of petrol, decked with ladders and drums of oil. The fire engines again assumed their weight—their massive tyres appeared again hard and heavy to touch, slugging and relentless, heavily set in duplicate on thick oiled axles. The ladders and hooks and ropes and hose all appeared dull and intractable, bruising to the fingers.

Pudden Rice looked over at Teetgen taking off his jacket, at the braces and the soiled striped shirt emerging, at the man peeled of the doll. 'Well,' he thought; and for a moment hesitated standing there, thinking he was thinking. Suddenly he looked up, in surprise—there seemed nothing to think about—and walked slowly over into the boothole, where under the bare electric light he took up the blacking brush and looked round, without success, for something to polish.

AN ESCAPADE IN 1934

BY PHILIP TOYNBEE

'Would you . . .' I gulped and stuttered a little and began again. 'I wondered if you'd like to come for a walk on Sunday.'

I stared above his little round face at spikes of bleached hair.

'I'm afraid I've got a quartet practice. I'm terribly sorry.'

This was not the first rebuff, but I knew that it must be the last. I knew that gossip was already near to that high pitch which even official ears must hear. Already I had caught many glances from the junior table, half-amused, half-nervous; and already my contemporaries had begun their ribald persecuting hints. I dismissed Simpson and he galloped away to join his milling garrulous friends in their warren of studies. He had been warned, as all of us had once been grimly warned, against just that Sunday walk, and I had bitterly noted the prim instructed tone of his refusals.

Two days later I approached the house notice-board down the narrow stone passage of the senior studies. I could see the formidable sheet of paper hanging in its usual place, and I walked with my eyes fixed there. Eleven names. I read the first, the second, the third—no danger here, for my name could only be the eleventh. But it was not. C. V. K. Weston-Grant—uncompromisingly dissimilar. 'Hard Cheese, P. T.' 'Tough luck, Toyners.' Yet the term before I had slouched in a dark-blue cap across the football field, both hands in pockets, a grandee with a dozen exquisite privileges. And now, in summer, I was a cricketing joke, too inexpert even for this least distinguished team. Hard cheese, indeed.

'I want you to be in really first-class condition for the New College scholarship. Only two months to go, you know.'

Two months! Did he suspect how wickedly I had abused the privilege of working privately, unsupervised? I had read Mrs. Dalloway, it's true, and Dubliners and Berry and Co.—but not Feiling, Thompson and Trevelyan.

These episodes, aggravated by the tension of my age, led to the sudden formulation of an extravagant pretence. It was not a decision—nothing could have been less decisive. But I began, on that unaccompanied Sunday walk, to pretend that I would run away. I was absorbed, not by fantastic destinations, but by the small practical details of escape. How would I contrive to fetch my suitcase from the matron's box-room? What hour would be the most propitious? How should I word the farewell message to my housemaster?

Within a few days the pretence had become an obsession. I determined to test the non-committal preliminaries, and, by overcoming the first obstacles, give some substance to the fantasy. I

fetched the suitcase, unobserved, packed it and hid it in my cupboard. On the next morning, and during one of my many unsupervised hours, I stole through the ugly town and bought a single ticket at the Midland station. In so cautious an advance it is difficult to determine a decisive moment, but looking back I believe it to have been this purchase of the ticket. I had now invested in my fantasy to the extent of eight and elevenpence. For the rest of that day I was for ever taking the ticket from my pocket-book and staring at the terrifying obsessive words—'Rugby' (in small letters) 'to LONDON' (in thick black capitals). This slip of green cardboard was more substantial than I had allowed for.

I slept badly that night and could neither work nor read the next morning. There was still one step which I knew must be taken before I could be satisfied. The selected train left at half-past three, and by three o'clock I had composed my valedictory message.

DEAR MR. WAINWRIGHT,

I am very sorry for the inconvenience which I know my decision must cause you. The fact is that I have begun to feel my life here altogether too selfish. A point comes when one must do something for others. I shall probably go to a Toc H settlement and work there.

Yours, with apologies,

T. P. TOYNBEE.

I was not conscious of deception, for I had thoroughly deceived myself. And, besides, I still considered that this was only a rehearsal for a possible future performance. Leaving the note on my study table, I believed that within an hour I would have returned to find it still undiscovered there.

I had decided on a brazen escape, walking openly to the station with trilby hat and suitcase. Just out of bounds, at the top of the long villa-lined road which leads to the station, I passed my friend Mr. Barter.

'Off to the dentist,' I called, taking off my hat to him across the street.

'Sympathies,' he said.

I laughed in a sort of hysterical ecstasy.

When the train arrived—a great, dirty, loud express from Birmingham or beyond—I stepped into a third-class compartment, and then quickly out again. I paused on the platform, suitcase in hand. A flag waved, a whistle blew: I fumbled at the door: the train was moving and I was in it. As we left the station I stared across the spreading red strips of the town at Butterfield's steeple. The squat, familiar chapel tower. In my note-book I wrote:

'June 7th, 1934. (Rugby to London.) I have taken the most momentous decision of my life. May God be with me!'

It was a period of noble schoolboy passion, when the Officers' Training Corps, fagging and corporal punishment were ogres more or less freshly discovered. The dynamic, and to some extent the focal point of this rebellion was No. 4 Parton Street, headquarters of Esmond Romilly's *Out of Bounds*. I had been the Rugby agent of that scurrilous, pungent, iconoclastic magazine—though no more successful in this rôle than in cricket or in love. It was as natural a goal for me as Herzen's house in Hampstead had once been for refugees from European tyrants.

I remember the eerie unfamiliarity of London in a June sun ;—sun in the Euston Road and on the old graveyard of St. Pancras Church ; on Southampton Row and the acres of Russell Square. It was a London which I, a winter native of St. John's Wood, had never known—the London of station hotels, of snack bars, one-room lodgings and Indian students. Soon it was to be the *only* London that I knew.

A boy was leaving the shop as my taxi drew up in Parton Street, a short, square, dirty figure with a square white face and sweaty hair. 'I'm looking for Esmond Romilly,' I said.

'Yes?'

He was instantly, dramatically, on his guard, conspiratorial, prepared for violent aggression or ingenious deceit. I thrilled and trembled more hysterically than ever.

'I'm Toynbee,' I said. 'Toynbee of Rugby.'

Esmond looked sharply up and down the short street, then opened the shop door and pushed me through it. That shop! the archetype of all the 'People's Books,' 'Workers' Bookshops,' 'Popular Bookshops' that I was to know so intimately in the next four years. The solemn red-backed classics of the Marx-Engels-Lenin institute, the multi-coloured pamphlets by 'Harry' or 'Willy' or Palme-Dutt, the Soviet Posters of moonlit Yalta or sunlit tractors—the whole marvellous atmosphere of conspiracy and wishful-persecution. Now I could take better stock of my Herzen, of my confederate, and, I already suspected, of my pitiless leader.

At this time he was fifteen years old. Six months before he had run away from Wellington, established his headquarters in Parton Street and launched his astonishing assault on the great impervious citadel of the Public Schools. His life was to be a short one, for he was killed over Hamburg in the winter of 1941, but in seven years he concentrated more startling events, more fantastic adventures, escapes, varieties of experience, than most of us achieve in a normal life. He was the most remarkable, and in many ways the most delightful, of my friends and contemporaries.

At this period he was at the height of intolerant fanaticism, a bristling rebel against home, school, society . . . the world. Though

he described himself as a 'communist,' his anarchic self-sufficiency had nothing in common with the proprieties and heavy discipline of the communist party. Indeed he was as much of an *enfant terrible* to those sober pundits of King Street as he was to the headmasters of public schools. His seven years were to be a continuous mellowing (though never to that odious 'moderation' which wise elders prophesied), but in 1934 Esmond was a terrifying figure. He was dirty and ill-dressed, immensely strong for his age and size: his flat face gave the impression of being deeply scarred, and his eyes flared and smouldered as he talked.

This was the figure that I confronted in the Parton Street bookshop. 'I've run away,' I said.

He was instantly 'enthusiastic.' Had he been an orthodox communist he would have instructed me to go back at once, to organise cells, to create shock-brigades of Marxist Rugbeians . . . a project all too typically communist both in its superficial common sense and in its profound absurdity. But Esmond's anarchism refused to calculate. I had committed an *acte gratuite*—I had made a brave gesture of defiance, and he delighted in it. Now his welcome was as warm as I could wish, and, sitting in the closed bookshop under a fierce bust of Lenin, I became voluble and boastful.

'Go on!' he would say at every pause. 'Go on. This is terrific.'

I told a distorted story, although, as with the note to my house-master, I was quite unconscious of distortion. So little had I learned to know my own motives that I could provide any motive which seemed appropriate. Now I made no reference to Simpson, or the cricket team, or the New College scholarship—least of all to the Toc H hostel. I had run away because I was a communist. This story, told under Lenin's bust to a delighted listener, had a retrospective virtue: by the time I had finished I was convinced of my revolutionary enthusiasm.

The spell lasted an hour or two, then suddenly broke as we were eating our supper in the Theobald's Road. In my house, prayers had already begun: it was impossible that my absence had not been noticed. In a moment all my normal schoolboy fears invaded me, and I realised for the first time the enormity, the irrevocability, of my offence. Oh, God, why had I done it, why had I ruined my life, branded myself for ever as the black sheep who had run away from school! And all the time Esmond's loud voice hammered at me across the café table. I would have returned, abject, by the next train but for the greater terror of this dictatorial boy. I had succumbed to him entirely, and even in my panic I maintained a bluff imitative manner, swearing with him, smoking and making plans for the future.

'You can sleep on a mattress,' he said, 'and you can be joint

editor. As for money, I get along all right with occasional journalism. You ought to manage.'

'I'll manage,' I said.

And after supper the spell was cast again. Beautiful visitors arrived at Parton Street and sat with us, drinking beer in the filthy bedroom. There was a man with a beard and leather trousers who drank whisky from a flask, smoked cigars and talked of Jimmy Joyce and Ginny Woolfe. He had got drunk with Aldington, insulted Eliot, written for the *London Mercury*. There was also a lean man with thick spectacles, and he, Esmond whispered, had tried to commit suicide two days before. His fingers were stained dark brown, his nails bitten to the quick. Esmond treated these visitors without respect, and it was clear to me that they were as afraid of him as I was. Yet they were the life I had longed for—Verlaine, Gauguin, Dowson. . . . I slept happily.

Two days passed, so fantastic and unreal that they have left few traces in my memory. Delegates arrived at Parton Street from other public schools, and we interviewed them in our office behind the shop. 'Ledward of Charterhouse—no bloody good.' 'Pilkington of Lancing—he's done some sound work.' Esmond infected me with his apocalyptic faith in the imminent downfall of the citadel. The evidence was small enough, but already a headmaster had lost his nerve and expelled an *Out of Bounds* agent, already three Eton boys had resigned in a body from the Officers' Training Corps, already an assistant master had promised an article. It was only in the rare moments when I was alone that terror possessed me again. What were they planning, those grim inscrutable forces in the red and blue brick walls? At those moments I knew that the citadel was not only impregnable but irresistible—indeed no citadel at all but an octopus with a thousand sinuous, penetrating tentacles. I knew that not even Parton Street, with Lenin's bust, with Esmond, with the bearded friend of Joyce, was safe from these tentacles. Did I even wish to escape them? I was no Esmond Romilly, to keep my head indefinitely above the phosphorescent waters.

But the third day provided what I had lacked before, emotional justification for my escapade. Sir Oswald held a monster meeting at Olympia.

In the afternoon we bought knuckle-dusters at a Drury Lane ironmonger, and I remember the exaltation of trying them on. We flexed our fingers. 'A bit too big.' 'Not very comfortable on the thumb.' We were expert knuckle-duster buyers. In the bus our pockets hung heavy and sinister with the weight of these weapons, and our hands closed over them like the hands of gunmen over automatics.

Down the *cul-de-sac* beside Addison Road Station the crowd

was already seething like drab maggots, relieved only by the bright scarlet of their sun-lit flags. On the other side of the street black-shirts were filing to the entrance of Olympia, separated from the crowd by squadrons of foot and mounted police. Sometimes one of the white horses would make a disciplined caracole, and the crowd would surge back from the pawing hoofs. Sometimes a cordon of constables would march aggressively forward with threatening batons. All this we saw as we hovered on the brink of the crowd. A moment later we had plunged in ; we were absorbed. We were no longer Esmond Romilly and Philip Toynbee but the crowd itself, the fear, courage, cruelty of the crowd. Oh, the dyonisiac delights of absorption—and the post-orgiastic disgust. How well I was to know them both !

But even in the dissolution of a mob, there are leaders—or rather entities which peculiarly concentrate the common emotion. One such, a thin young Jew in a frayed serge suit, had hoisted his banner far away from the blackshirts, and was attempting to organise a disciplined assault. The plan was to form a dense phalanx and to rush the blue cordon at a point where the mounted police seemed thinnest. The banner was double-staffed, and, owing to some incautious boastful word, I was entrusted with one of its supports : the organiser held the other. Esmond stood between us in the front rank, and the march began. The disorganised cheered us as we pushed through them, and many fell in behind. But the police had noted our progress from the first steps, had even, I suspected, noted the conference which preceded it. They advanced with truncheons raised to meet us, and we halted as if for a parley. But those were not the terms of our relationship.

‘Put that flag down or you’ll be arrested.’

‘Lackeys of the Fascists !’ shouted the Jew, and began to hit out with thin arms at the blue uniforms. In a moment his hands had been seized and pushed up his back. His pole of the banner had fallen, and I was left with the great red cloth trailing on the road behind me. It was absence of mind, not determination, which kept my pole aloft. And now the police had surrounded me, dividing me from Esmond and the others.

‘Do you want to be taken in charge too, or will you put it down.’
I put it down.

At this point I was close enough to the Fascists to see their taut or jeering faces. Perhaps they were ordinary faces, but I see them dramatised as altogether devilish and cruel—blond, arrogant young heads and the grizzled blocks of pugilists and convicts.

Now marbles were thrown among the horses’ hoofs, and down came one of them with all its four legs lashing at us. Someone ran forward to kick the struggling policeman.

We were shouting slogans.

‘One—two—three, four, five !
We want Mosley dead or alive.’

and

‘One—Two—Three—Four
What—are—the Fascists—for.
Lechery, Treachery, Hunger and WAR.’

Later, expensive cars began to arrive, providing, had they anticipated it, the most popular activity of all. It was impossible for the police to furnish a bodyguard for each car, and an isolated car was immediately assaulted. Hands and shoulders were pressed to the door, the roof, the spare-tyre. ‘HEAVE ! One, two, three, HEAVE !’ The car toppled slowly upwards and . . . but no, we never quite succeeded in capsizing one. The police were too quick for us. But I vividly remember the agonized, imploring face of a fat and furry woman, framed ludicrously in the window—and how we hooted and pressed our noses to the glass. Barbarous ; and we were to be repaid for our barbarity.

Entrance to the meeting was by ticket—but Esmond had somehow secured tickets for both of us. One blackshirt at the turnstile frowned and pursed his lips, but another smiled. The smile seems very sinister now, but at the time I believe we took it as proof of our plausibility. Now we were in the wide corridor which runs all round the arena, and the enemy was all about us. I remember a moment of panic, turning to see how the black tide had closed in behind us, shutting out the daylight. Then a courteous steward was conducting us to our seats.

The great auditorium of Olympia was nearly full—tier upon tier of the curious or enthusiastic—and the enthusiastic in great majority. In every open space, at the end of every row, stood black-jerseyed stewards with hands on hips, complacent and menacing. There was a flood-lit passage down the centre of the building, and a flood-lit rostrum at the south end ; altogether a flood-lit atmosphere of pomp and hysterical expectancy. The seats had been full for many minutes before hidden trumpets sounded a fanfare, and the Leader strode into the arc-lights. He was flanked by four young blonds, and a platoon of flag-bearing blackshirts followed in their wake. The procession moved very slowly down the aisle, amid shouts, screams and bellows of admiration, amid straining arms. Sir Oswald held one arm at his side, thumb in leather belt : the other flapped nonchalantly from time to time as he turned a high chin to inspect us.

He had stood at the rostrum for at least two minutes of this din, before his own arm rose, formidably, to impose silence. And then

... not the commanding single voice but a sudden blasphemous interruption from behind us. It was shocking and incredible—as if a scene had been made at a coronation.

‘Hitler and Mosley mean Hunger and War.’

‘Hitler and Mosley mean Hunger and War.’

The voices, ragged at the opening, had quickly united in the slogan. Yet after the blare of trumpets and all the applause, they seemed lost and thin in the great glass cavern of the auditorium. I turned just in time to see three young men and a girl standing side by side, their mouths raised towards the ceiling. A moment later the stewards had closed in on them and they had sunk out of sight in a storm of black bodies and white fists. The girl screamed, and it was this (for chivalrous motives are too rare to be deprecated) which brought Esmond and me to our feet. All the hollow, accumulated hysteria of the stomach had found a release, and it was not difficult to be bold. We ran up the steps and threw ourselves on the stewards’ backs. I remember the coarse rub of a jersey against my cheek, before I was thrown over from behind and pressed tight to the boards. Someone had caught my arms and twisted them behind my back: I was dragged up from the floor and propelled to the stair head. A glimpse of faces below me, yearning upward for their victim, and I was tumbling down the outer stairs. Arms whirled like windmills and thudded on my head and back. I was again in the corridor, as thick with blackshirts as it had been before the meeting.

In such sadistic hysteria as this the victims of it lose all power of intelligent calculations. They seemed, in that struggling, fiery mass, to be hitting each other as often as they hit me. I was able to burrow, almost unnoticed, between their legs, and to break away from them. Then I began to run down the wide corridor towards the outer gate. But blackshirts were scattered everywhere, crouching to assault me, and I wheeled away from them to the right. It was a desperate mistake, for I found myself under the tiers of the auditorium, and the further I went, the lower sank the tiers. Finally I crawled as far into the dark as I could and turned to confront my pursuers. One of them had been close behind, and now, bending to reach me, he prized at me with his foot. Then he had gripped my leg, and I was dragged over the dusty boards on my back, and out again into the corridor.

But now I saw a turnstile gate ahead of me, narrow and formidably blocked with waiting blackshirts. Some last wild spasm freed me from my captor and drove me into the expectant platoon of guards. How I penetrated them it is hard to understand, but the result was

the nightmare's climax. I was in no friendly street, safe-guarded by the police whom I had so wantonly provoked: no cars or sunlight or passers-by. I was in a small covered courtyard, and ahead of me was another narrow gate guarded by the same black figures. I lay down, my knees covering my chest, my hands covering my face, and through my hands I began to scream. 'Don't kill me. For Christ's sake don't kill me.' A vicious kick in the back made me scream louder; but no more kicks followed it. Someone had taken my ear between finger and thumb, and was pulling me to my feet. It was a tall blackshirt officer, dressed in a black leather coat and a peaked black hat. He led me blubbering to the further gate. 'A lesson, my young red, which I fancy you won't forget'—and I had fallen, with his last contemptuous kick, on to a pavement, among people in ordinary clothes.

Someone was helping me to my feet, and supporting me along the pavement. I was aware of people standing round, staring and commiserating. Then there was a car beside the pavement, and still sobbing, I was stepping into it.

When I looked up I found myself on the back seat of the car, sitting beside a young man in a tweed coat. His high cheek was deeply cut, his left eye bruised, and he was staunching the blood from a broken tooth. But his eyes were dry, his bearing preoccupied and self-possessed. He turned his battered face to me and asked if I was feeling better. I tried to smile, but there was no answering smile.

'It was just the shock,' I said.

The humiliation of that moment is more vivid now than all the nightmare inside Olympia.

We were driven to a private house where a first-aid post had been organized. While they attended to my injuries—a black eye, a torn ear and a swollen ankle—I heard how the interruptions had been planned. Groups of four were scattered all over the auditorium, and they were to shout their slogans at exact five-minute intervals throughout the meeting. Cars were running continuously from the gates of Olympia to the first-aid post, for casualties had been anticipated. Indeed it seemed that everything had been anticipated, except my superfluous and shameful intervention.

I left the house as soon as they had done with me, for the atmosphere was not congenial. And once away from the witnesses of my disgrace, I was soon able to forget it. The reaction was a state of singing exaltation. I sang as I ran along the Hammersmith Road; I sang up Kensington High Street—and across Hyde Park Corner. By then the shame had been effectively exorcized, and I was a hero. I could take a bus, and, sitting on a front seat, I could plan the story I would tell to Esmond. The omissions came very naturally to me, for I no longer believed in them. I believed that I

had struck my first blow for the revolution, and that the revolution itself must surely follow.

It was a shock to find Esmond already at his typewriter, composing a story for some weekly magazine. But this stubborn realism was always to prove a corrective to his fantasies, and without it his picaresque existence would have been impossible. On my breathless arrival he gladly left the typewriter and responded to my shrill enthusiasm. He had been thrown out, less savagely it seemed, by a different gate, and had returned an hour before me.

We sat for hours in the bedroom, recounting tirelessly, but not competitively, the details of our adventures. And our hopes became more apocalyptic than ever. Surely we had heard the first mutter of machine-guns in the suburbs of a brooding Petrograd, and tomorrow . . . I fell asleep to dream the whole adventure as it should have been.

‘A letter for you.’

Esmond's finger was already at the flap of the envelope when I came down to the shop. I had woken to a grey reaction, to terror and shame and a morning of heavy summer rain.

‘DEAR TOYNBEE,

I don't know whether this letter will reach you, but if it does I want you to realize that this is a crisis in your life. You have taken a most thoughtless and selfish step, whatever your motives may have been, and the harm can't, I'm afraid, be undone. But Mrs. Wainwright and I do implore you to come to your senses. A great deal depends on what you do now. If you see fit to come back I will meet you in London (my train would arrive Euston at 4.15). Perhaps you would send a telegram.

Yours sincerely,

J. Q. WAINWRIGHT.

A crisis in my life! Oh, the mad and criminal act I had committed. But was it too late? Would they take me back now, if I promised that never, never again . . .

‘If they've traced you here,’ said Esmond, who had read the letter over my shoulder, ‘you'll have to move. I know a place you could go.’ ‘I'm going back to Rugby,’ I said. ‘I must telegraph at once.’

And in my panic to submit I was impervious even to his snarled contempt. I packed my suitcase and hurried away from the terrible little shop, from the terrible square figure at the door. I telegraphed; and for the rest of that morning and afternoon I walked through the rainy streets, perusing my housemaster's letter. Would they expel me? Would they, if I submitted to every indignity, let me stay?

They expelled me, but how gracefully it was done; how painless the operation proved!

In the restaurant car, over crumpets, tea and strawberry jam, Mr. Wainwright began his kind interrogation.

'I hate to ask this, Philip—but how much had young Simpson to do with it all?'

That was a shock, for I had quite underestimated the acuteness of official eyes and ears. I admitted that Simpson had played his part in my decision.

'Of course,' said Mr. Wainwright, leaning back and stuffing his briar, 'if you would give up this communism, the headmaster *might*, I say *might*, be influenced.'

But he had decently admitted that the chance was slight, and I found the temptation to recant quite easy to resist. I smiled a dignified and secretive refusal.

For the next two days I lived in the Wainwrights' private quarters, while the headmaster ruminated and consulted. I was strictly segregated from the other boys—a bitter if a just deprivation, for I longed to exhibit my doomed, dignified face, and my wounds. Sometimes the extreme kindness of my hosts would cause a tearful collapse of dignity, but usually I preserved my tumbril mask.

On the second morning after my return the sentence was finally and irrevocably passed: I was to leave that day. But had I, before the taxi and the last good-bye, a request to make? I asked first that I might appear before the other prefects, for this scene had become an obsession to me. And in those five minutes I extravagantly atoned for two days' repression. I laughed wryly at their uneasy, sympathetic faces; I smoked a cigarette; I admitted that Olympia had been pretty tough.

'Good luck, Toyners, good luck!'

'Thanks, comrades. I expect I shall need it.'

I winked my purple eye.

And now, only an hour before the taxi would arrive, was there something else?

'One more thing, sir.' I looked him honestly in the face. 'I'd like to say good-bye to Simpson.'

There was hardly a pause.

'I don't see why not. I'll fetch him.'

I began to pace the room, and when the door opened and closed, I hardly glanced at the small untidy figure of my victim. 'Friendship in these places seems impossible. I wanted only that, but it was misinterpreted. I hope you won't remember all this painful business . . .' I was interrupted by a sob, and when I turned in my pacing I saw a quivering lip and big tears rolling down the fat beloved cheeks. I strode across to him, shook his warm hand and pushed him from me through the study door.

The epilogue is by Captain Grimes. A few months afterwards

I applied to Rugby for a reference and the result was more generous than anything I could have hoped for.

'We consider,' wrote the headmaster, 'that his action was in many ways a fine one.'

'They may kick you out,' said Grimes, 'but they never let you down.'

EPISTLE TO MY GRANDSON

BY R. C. TREVELYAN

Dear Philip Erasmus,

Although you still are privileged to enjoy
Illiteracy's leisurely delights
And the untroubled paradise of perfect speechlessness,
Yet what forbids me now to write, and seal and post to you
This letter which someday you will unseal
And read and understand?

'Thou best Philosopher!' the poet cried.
But what that mute philosophy may be,
How can I know? Yet in part I might guess.
A Platonist you cannot be, since you as yet
Have no ideas whereon to meditate,
Nor dialectic skill to track them down.
'Cogito, ergo sum' means naught to you,
Who lack discourse of reason.
Yet, like Spinoza, you may contemplate
And know and love some few
Of the infinite modes of God's eternal substance:
The inexplicable marvel of bright lights;
Patches of colour, moving or at rest;
Your own fingers and thumbs, your mother's breast;
The pleasure of being soaped and sponged, and then
The rapture of floating naked in warm water;
Faces that smile, hands that caress and vanish;
Noises of all kinds, voices
That talk and laugh and shout;
Notes of music, strange and sweet, or terrifying;
Delicious scents wafted from you know not whence.
All these perceptions come to you from without;

Yet to your infant mind events they seem
 Within your solitary sovereign self,
 Mere phases of a solipsistic dream.

Blissfully thus awhile

Without Thought, without Memory, without Reason,
 Lie cradled, like a god, in lonely trance
 Creating with each moment a new changing universe.
 Then little by little—ah but all too soon!—
 Desire and Will and Memory shall awake,
 And the cold dawn of jealous Reason break,
 Scattering with unwelcome light
 The nescience and felicity of your warm and homely night.
 But in its stead this wondrous waking world
 Of solid substance, clothes and toys,
 Of living things on feet and wings,
 Cats and women, birds and boys,
 Must then become your home, which you must learn
 Trustfully and lovingly to inhabit and explore.
 Thenceforth what your philosophy shall be
 It is for you to choose ;
 Whether like Epicurus you believe
 That alone by the pathway of the senses
 We may attain true knowledge ; or whether, lured
 By Plato's magic or Berkleyan logic,
 In metaphysical dreams you wander lost ;
 Or else, like wise old Horace,
 You swear allegiance to no single master
 And follow no one school ; for within ourselves,
 Or nowhere, may true wisdom's root be found.

What then is wisdom ? Ah, who shall say ?
 A flowering tree with blossoms gay,
 Till they scatter and fall as the leaf grows green,
 And the slowly ripening fruit is seen
 By warm suns mellowed, made strong by rain—
 Fruits of knowledge, and joy, and pain ?
 Various and manifold are they of flavour ;
 But the sweetest and best will be those that savour
 Of the childhood happiness that now is yours.
 Though grief await you and desire thwarted,
 Though your own hopes and the world's hopes be foiled and aborted,
 Yet the sorrow vanishes, the joy endures.

A TOUCH OF THE SUN

BY THOMAS DRIBERG, M.P.

For some time now I have been receiving weekly a duplicated news-sheet called (characteristically, it will be seen) *The Message from Hargrave*. It is the organ of the Social Credit Party and an outlet for the energy of the Party's leader, John Hargrave. Lately *The Message* has entered on its seventh year of publication; it has appealed for prayers, alms, and healers. It seems to be time, therefore, to attempt some analysis, on internal evidence, of the doctrine and personnel of this little-known sect, whose green-shirted votaries some may recall having seen in political processions before the war.

First it must be explained that the Social Credit movement, like the Christian Church, is in a state of schism. The most eminent theoretician of Social Credit, Major C. H. Douglas, is not in communion with the Hargrave Greenshirts, and may indeed find their shrill militancy embarrassing. There is also the Economic Reform Club, which contains many friends of Social Credit but takes, say Greenshirts, a 'confusionist' line. It is on this club that the full force of Mr. Hargrave's *odium theologicum* has on occasion been turned—particularly in April, 1943, when the club published a booklet with a title similar to that of a 20-year-old book by Major Douglas. 'This impudent and ignorant scribbler,' stormed Mr. Hargrave, 'not content with a very dirty-cunning twist of the title of Douglas's book, does not know—cannot see—that the Social Credit mechanism is founded on A SPIRITUAL BASIS.' (Capitals occur frequently in Mr. Hargrave's writing, which is always lively and readable.) The definition of this spiritually-based mechanism is contained in the oft-reiterated 'Three Demands' of the S.C.P., which are: (1) Open the National Credit Office; (2) Issue the National Dividend to all; (3) Apply the Price Adjustment at the retail end.

The Message from Hargrave has a sub-title, 'The Voice of the People,' and bears the slogan 'God's Providence is Mine Inheritance!' (Mr. Hargrave's exclamation-mark). Mr. Hargrave is a great sloganiser: among his favourites are 'Social Credit is Coming—Fast!', 'Whelm on Me, ye Resurrected Men!', 'Christ Preached Social Credit', 'Power to the Green Shirts!', 'Social Credit is Solar Magick!' and (particularly good for bawling in Trafalgar Square) 'Social Credit is a Politico-Therapeutic Catalyst.' To 'land-reclamation experts . . . arboricultural research-workers . . . fishermen . . . handicraftsmen generally, such as . . . handloom-weavers, gem-setters, potters,' he cries: "'Action Stations!' is the Order of the Day!' He is also, notably, a symbolist. His

Message bears the S.C.P. 'keysign'; this, says his Director of Propaganda, whose prose style is strikingly like Mr. Hargrave's own, is 'a Life-symbol, alive with meaning and creative force. It is the ancient symbol of the Upright Man . . .'

It is, further, 'not a mere scrawl or scribble, but a valid telematic periapt—a dynamic Earth-Sun-hieroglyph that shall be a banner to rally the free, the life-urgent men.'

How many life-urgent men have rallied, so far, to the hieroglyph? Forty-nine at least; for that is the number of Mr. Hargrave's 'Shadow Government' of Great Britain. They are frequently said to be 'watching . . .'; but 'their names will not be made known until a later date.' Meanwhile 'the common Man is already beginning to say' (with a percipience perceptible only, perhaps, to Mr. Hargrave), "'These 49 Men are damn-well right!'" They will take a prominent part, it may be supposed, in the by-elections that Mr. Hargrave is now proposing to fight. Immediately after Common Wealth's victory at Skipton, he began appealing, imperiously, for funds. 'You ought to be glad to have the chance to help in this way,' he wrote. 'Now, come on, and no more nonsense about it.' (He never hesitates to rap his followers' knuckles: 'you are damn bad recruiters,' he told them on July 23, 1943.)¹ By February 25 last, £312 had come in—just enough to cover two deposits. S.C.P. candidates will be readily distinguishable by the electorate from all others; for they will obey the Twelve Masterwords, according to which Mr. Hargrave's Men in Green (as he loves to call them) 'must be neat, clean, and smart in appearance . . . must speak clearly, using words exactly . . . must be, or must become, wise or strong, or both . . . must listen to the inner voice, and see with the inward eye.' S.C.P.-ers now in the Forces are also expected to wear something green out of sight.

No one, I think, will dispute S.C.P.'s claim to be quite unlike any other political party. It is also unusual in that it repudiates both the Left and the Right in current politics with equal vehemence. But it does not belong to what Mr. Hargrave calls 'the muddled middle': it is the Third Resolvent. I say that it repudiates Left and Right alike; but in fact I, a fairly close student, can recall only one direct attack by Mr. Hargrave on the ordinary Conservative Right—a conventional exposé of Blimperry. (This is, of course, apart from his basic onslaught on 'bankers' debt money' and the financial system.) On the other hand, his opposition to the Left, and in particular his suspicion of the Soviet Union, are constant. He has suggested

¹ To a too-candid supporter who advocates 'self-discipline and quiet training,' he writes (February 11, 1944): 'I claim to have produced the most highly disciplined organisation in Great Britain since the days of Cromwell's "New Model" Army . . . You are an insolent and impudent person, and there is no sign of self-discipline in you.'

repeatedly that there is something phoney or mysterious about the war between Germany and Russia. On March 26, 1943, he wrote: 'Using logic (-plus) as my means of knowing, I should say that the Nazi-Soviet war is likely to stalemate round about August this year. Not a formal peace, and perhaps not even a formal truce: a kind of "cease-fire."' Before using logic (-plus) on this occasion, Mr. Hargrave might have availed himself of the services of Mr. R. H. Naylor, the former *Sunday Express* astrologer, who is listed as one of the most prominent of his Men in Green.

At any rate, he takes, in higher-flown language, the same position as those politicians who used to say that Communist Russia was 'just as bad as' Nazi Germany. He uses the term 'Commu-Nazi' or 'Commu-Fascist.' Both, to him, are examples of the servile work-state. Work for all—'full employment'—is precisely the policy that he is most feverishly opposed to. His hostility to Sir William Beveridge's and other efforts to provide such a policy moves him to real eloquence. In last year's Academy there was a bronze head of Sir William. Here is Mr. Hargrave's impolite description of it:

It is curiously fantastic-real. It looks like a caricature, but isn't. The long, flat-topped skull, the eyes sunken back and lost in their sockets as though instinctively retracted from the blinding light of day, the gigantic bulb-like nose overpowering every other feature—the overgrown pumpkin nose of a gnome—the thin lips of the wide mouth crumpled into a nutcrackerish jaw, all give a Grandmotherly impression. Without doubt this is 'Granny': Little Red Riding Hood's Granny who was gobbled up by the Wolf, and then—and then—rematerialised as a Granny-with-a-Wolf-under-her-skin . . .

Most significant of all indications of S.C.P.'s political alignment is the enthusiastic commendation, in the *Message* for March 3 last, of a much-discussed book, *Out of the Night*, by Jan Valtin. This is described as 'a very important book written by a German Communist' and as 'of such great political importance that every Member . . . and supporter of the Social Credit Party ought to read it . . . All our propagandists must go through it carefully, and learn its many lessons. It is . . . quite obviously true.' It is also stated that 'the author, so far as one can gather, is still a Communist.' It is to be hoped that the S.C.P. propagandists include a few with sufficient knowledge of current affairs to point out to Mr. Hargrave (if they dare) the enormity of this *gaffe*. Both Valtin and the book have been completely discredited. He is not now a Communist. It was established in America recently that he had acted as an enemy agent, and a deportation order was made against him, though it has not been enforced. However, it is understood that he has enjoyed the confidence of such leading American thinkers as Mr. William Randolph Hearst.

With Mr. Hargrave's steady disapproval of the Left, and occasional disapproval of the Right, goes a surprising tenderness for a few gentlemen whom it is difficult, at first, to see as allies of the life-urgent Men in Green. Among them are some of the biggest monopoly capitalists of our time. He praises, for instance, Mr. Samuel Courtauld. He praises Lord Melchett. It may be that his tributes are unacceptable to these two: they cannot be so to Sir Alliott Verdon-Roe, the aircraft-manufacturer, who (according to *The Message*) has been one of S.C.P.'s most influential supporters. Like other small sectaries, Mr. Hargrave succumbs fairly often to the temptation of displaying his big names; it is a remarkable fact that his stage-army of a dozen or so big names contains at least three formerly associated with Sir Oswald Mosley and the British Union. One of these is Sir A. V. Roe. The second is Mr. Henry Williamson, the novelist, whose lapel used to sport the Fascist badge described rudely by non-Fascists as the 'flash-in-the-pan.' The third is Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, the military commentator, who—just as some old Army officers at Cheltenham attach themselves to the British-Israelites or Seventh Day Adventism—seems to have an incurable penchant for colourful Messiahs. At one time he was an admirer of Mr. Aleister Crowley, the magician, on whom he wrote a panegyric entitled 'Star of the West'; later he joined Sir Oswald, becoming one of his prospective candidates for Parliament; now, presumably, in the intervals of criticising the grand strategy of the war he tries on his green shirt, keeps himself neat, clean and smart, and practises life-urgency. General Fuller, Mr. Hargrave has explained, is one of those who see with the inward eye, 'the eye of Osiris.'

It will have been noted that S.C.P. is animated by a strong religious impulse. Here is part of the collect which the faithful are now required to recite, individually or together, daily:

O Thou Great Light-Bringer, grant to the British People a Living Sword of Light in the House of Commons, chosen from the Solar Men of the Social Credit Party, to fight for a Sane Debtfree Money-System by the establishment of Social Credit as the law of the land . . .¹

Orthodox liturgists may well envy the explicitness of these instructions to the addressee of the prayer, whoever He may be. In general, though there is frequent mention of Christ, Mr. Hargrave's devotion (like that of the Nazi mythologists) tends to wander in the direction of the old native pagan deities, and towards the Sun: etymologically,

¹ A friend wrote to suggest a less 'pagan' version of this prayer. Mr. Hargrave replied, 'No, the words came from the Light-Source, and therefore with God's blessing. They came to me after meditation in the Quaker manner. I shall not change them.'

his Party colour should be not green but heliotrope. The *Message* in which he summed up his activities in 1943 began, 'Praise God, Amen. I have not forgotten the Sun.' In the same *Message* he said, 'I have been Blazingly Bombastic—like The Sun blazing in high heaven.' It is at the equinoxes and the solstices (by which he sometimes dates his *Message*) that Mr. Hargrave seems to become most excitable. His last Autumn Equinox *Message* ended: 'Tell me, what other Party dare ring bells in your heart?'

His most sustained essay in pagan piety is perhaps the postscript to *Message* 308, headed 'The Anglo-Saxon God of Plenty, it is somewhat deafening to read, but here a few extracts:

Who is the bearded giant with the mane of corn-gold hair . . . who holds aloft a Sun-Wheel in his left hand . . . carries a basketful of Eggs in his right hand, and stands upon the back of a Great Finny Fish? It is CRODON, the old Anglo-Saxon god of Plenty . . . He laughs to think you wouldn't know that the wheel he is spinning . . . is, in fact, The Sun . . . And he laughs and laughs and laughs . . . He bellows forth this bellythundering laughter when he sees a people who can't—aren't allowed to—feed their chickens in their backyards and get a basketful of Eggs! Ho-dear! Ha!—ha-ha-ha! he laughs and laughs, fit to split his sides, when he thinks of a fishing-people who not only cannot (are not allowed to) feed their hens in their own backyards—but who—Ha! Ho!—would you believe it?—when they catch fish go and 'zone' it—Ha-HAA!—hoo-hoo!—ha-ha-ha-ha-haaaaaaa!!!!—yes—ho-dear!—ha!—go and 'zone' it so that they can't get it to eat! . . . And those who live in or near Croydon should keep a look out, for it may be that this Great Old Forgotten God of Plenty once took a fancy to that place.

Sir Herbert Williams, the redoubtable Conservative M.P. for Croydon (S.), ought to know about this.

Since there is this quasi-religious obsession, it was not to be supposed that a 'progressive' Archbishop of Canterbury would long be immune from the solicitations of the lion-hearted (and lion-hunting) Greenshirt leader. Moreover, one of Dr. Temple's warmest admirers has said of him, 'The trouble about the Archbishop is that he's too approachable—too accessible to any crank with a line to shoot.' So, on February 4, 1943, we find Solar Man No. 1 snugly esconced in the archiepiscopal study at Lambeth. 'It was clear,' reported Mr. Hargrave, 'that the economic teaching of Social Credit had made a deep impression on him.' So deep was the impression that the forthright Archbishop wrote, then and there, a statement as cautious, as general, and as statesmanlike as anything written by his predecessor:

. . . one of the great needs of our time is to promote the discussion of the economic structure of our society . . . One of the

agencies most effective in promoting such discussion is the Social Credit Movement. Without saying one way or the other what I might think of its detailed policy, I heartily welcome its challenge to traditional methods, which can then be met by the defenders of the tradition . . .

Mr. Hargrave, examining these words in his next *Message*, wrote, ' . . . already, so it seems to me, the banner of Social Credit floats above the tented field.' He added a caveat against reading into the Archbishop's words 'more than we ought.' Later in the same *Message*, however, he has reached the decision '—and the logic is unbreakable—that the Archbishop is on the side of Social Credit.' Fourteen weeks later—a period long enough for the blurring of caveats—the Archbishop figures in a list of 'well-known men and women' who are 'not just figureheads' but actively lined up 'in a united front for Social Credit.' The Archbishop's name is in the bottom row, representing 'Religion,' with those of Mr. R. H. Naylor ('Prediction') and a Baroness Heyking ('Philosophy'). (About the same time, Mr. W. J. Brown, M.P. for Rugby, attempted to cover himself similarly, sending a long and carefully qualified message with the stipulation that it was not to be quoted except in full; here is his name, also, in the 'united front for Social Credit.') Alas for 'unbreakable' logic! The Archbishop, it seems, took umbrage at this manipulation of his charity and wrote to Mr. Hargrave forbidding such use of his name; so a whole issue of *The Message* had to be devoted to writing the Archbishop a sad, sharp sermon on moral cowardice. It must have been an instructive episode for both parties.

On February 11, 1944, *The Message* was headed, 'Calling All Healers to Active Service with the S.C.P.' (The service is to be given 'FREELY in the name of "The Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings"!') For some time before this Mr. Hargrave had manifested a deep interest in, and had even practised, spiritual or psychic healing. There was the curious incident in a West Midland town, thus described in Mr. Hargrave's diary:

Met at bus-stop by —, one of our new S.C.P. members, a pitman, and stayed in his home during week-end. That evening his wife had her right hand badly scalded . . . Intense pain . . . Held my right hand 6 inches above the scalded hand. Within 3 minutes she said, 'My hand's getting cooler!' . . . In less than 15 minutes all inflammation and pain gone . . . No sign of a blister even.

In August 1943 he wrote about ancient 'centres of power' (Stonehenge, etc.), which 'still hold some "power".' Their power, however, is 'too "ghostly," too remote.' The New Solar Civilisation 'will create its own centres of power.' At least three such already

exist: Godshill Camp, near Fordingbridge, 'an active centre of the New Agriculture' as well as of healing and solar politics; World Service, a spiritualist 'sanctuary' off Belgrave Square; and Bodenham Manor, the west-country headquarters of the formidable Mr. Charles D. Boltwood, who deserves a digression to himself.

It was on December 10, 1943, that Mr. Hargrave was able to announce the allegiance of Mr. Boltwood. By courtesy of the Rev. Canon F. Hood, Principal of the Pusey House, Oxford, and a leading amateur of Boltwoodiana, I am able to quote some illuminating passages from Mr. Boltwood's book, *Spiritual Science Liberates!*

Mr. Boltwood appears to have several addresses. Bodenham Manor is his 'Universal Centre of Light and Liberation.' There the sick 'may come and share the Light . . . No miraculous cures are promised, but if there is a free and unfettered mind ready to co-operate with the Principal, Charles D. Boltwood, then there is every reason for confidence that liberation will follow.' Indeed, 'steps are being taken so that the Medical Profession may recognise this scientific approach from the Spiritual Science aspect.' Such recognition might legitimately, I feel, be described as miraculous. At Bodenham, too, students may take, in person or by correspondence, the course and 'the final examination which brings the honoured reward—the College Diploma and "Letters" P.S.Sc.' (Practitioner of Spiritual Science). The training fee is £20, which can be spread over 3 years. One of the main objects for which funds are raised (in accursed bankers'-debt-money) is 'The Redemption of the Centre of Light and Liberation from its Mortgage.' Among the Centre's Principals, besides Mr. Boltwood, are a Matron of the Sanctuary of Liberation and a Hierophant (who is Mr. Boltwood's wife, always referred to as Mary-Angela).

Mr. Boltwood's preface to his own book is not written from Bodenham, but from the Parent Centre of the Universal Group of Intuitives, which is, or was in 1942, at 146 Worple Road, Wimbledon. Mary-Angela's introduction is written from an address given simply as 'Demonstrable Height, Wales.' As though preface and introduction were not enough, there is another introduction by a Miss Pearson and a foreword by Canon Charles Kingsley, the great Victorian writer; this is not an anachronism, for Kingsley dictates copiously through Mr. Boltwood, who, in addition to his academic and therapeutic activities, is clairaudient. Incidentally, Kingsley pays high tribute to Mr. Boltwood's Christ-like modesty and faithfulness. Mary-Angela also praises Mr. Boltwood—'a man of high ideals . . . urged on by a burning desire, and yet gentle as a woman'; they first met, she records, as Plymouth Brethren at Bury St. Edmunds in 1912, were married in 1914, and 'had the joy of being together for a few months' before Mr. Boltwood went off to the war. From

the trenches he sent home such 'little gems of thought' as 'Trial is a furnace through which many are called to pass, some are hardened by this process, whilst others are softened.'

The most practically important section of Mr. Boltwood's book is, without doubt, that containing actual instructions for curing one's own diseases by the recital of 'affirmations.' Among diseases dealt with in this way are cancer, diabetes, night sweats, nocturnal emissions, piles, pneumonia, and quinsy. ('Softening of the brain' is more difficult: 'it is advisable to consult a Spiritual Science Practitioner . . .') The affirmation for constipation runs thus:

O Infinite Love Action, remove all obstruction that impedes the natural exodus of waste product from the intestines of my outer court . . . Cause the nuclei of the plexus and the ganglion-cells, having their multipolar and unipolar power, to operate in harmony with the law of cleanliness and righteousness. Send forth, if needful, the rebuilders of wasted tissues, so that the true balance of serous, muscular, cellular and mucous coverings may rightly perform its functions in true and lawful order.

Particularly impressive is the affirmation for goitre, which begins:

O Infinite Leveller, Dispenser of true equilibrium; O Pituitary Organ and Minister of Justice, give unto the Common Carotid System the Iodised-Salt of thy substance . . .

The cure for tuberculosis is 'sure.' Apart from the affirmation, it consists simply in eating air. Dr. Nephi Cottam, D.C., an authority on craniopathy, found to his surprise (reports Mr. Boltwood) that after eating a good deal of air he was half a pound heavier at night than he had been in the morning. The method is given.

It will be seen that Mr. Hargrave (to return to him) is surrounded by a band of collaborators of exceptional distinction. Some of the best, of course, have passed on, over, or out. *The Message* occasionally contains a touching obituary of some old comrade who had been with Mr. Hargrave since, in 1920, he founded a kind of mystical camping movement called the Kibbo Kift Kindred. (The identity of the initials with those of the Ku Klux Klan is purely coincidental.) The Greenshirts as such date from 1930. One of the K.K.K. pioneers, a lady known as Blue Falcon, died last November: Mr. Hargrave records that she lettered the minutes or history of the movement, called Kinlog; that she personally took an illuminated address to the Duke of Windsor at Schloss Wasserleonburg in 1937; and that she was awarded the Green Oak Leaf in 1938 for standing up in the public gallery of the House of Commons and proclaiming 'Social Credit the Only Remedy!'

For a sponsor of prospective solar candidates, indeed, Mr. Har-

grave seems somewhat lacking in respect for the British Parliament. Last August he was referring irritably to its 'playtime charades' and 'mumbo-jumbo.' Even then, however, he had his 'own plans for steering Social Credit through Parliament, and should it become necessary to find a seat, the way for that will be made clear at the right moment.' It is to be hoped that the electors will respond to the test, which is 'not a blood-test, but an impulse-vibration-test'; that even the more conventional candidates will compete in touching babies for Hargrave's Evil instead of kissing them; and that hecklers will learn to bellow such queries as 'What, in your opinion, is the correct affirmation for rheumatoid arthritis?' Anyway, Mr. Hargrave has 'set up a Battle Standard—the Banner of the Sunburst, Powerful as a fairy flag.' He has prophesied 'a New Elizabethan Age' and said frankly (on December 3, 1943), 'My own personal ambition is to be the political "midwife" of such an Age in Great Britain.' I fear that he may be frustrated: the Mother of Parliaments deals only with the best Harley Street gynæcologists.

WALTER PATER

BY ROBIN IRONSIDE

Among the known circle of his acquaintances, Walter Pater moved with an effect of studied, if also earnest, remoteness from the small, daily disappointments and successes that form a standard pretext of social intercourse—nowhere more so than in a society whose pre-occupations are as artificially circumscribed as those of Oxford. 'You never felt,' Humphry Ward wrote of him, 'that he was quite at one with you in habits, feelings, preferences. His inner world was not that of anyone else at Oxford.' The appearance of remoteness in him evidently arose, however, less from a strain of indifferentism, though this was present in his character, than from a powerful gift of reserve. Vernon Lee who, before she met Pater in 1881, had read *The Renaissance* and was acquainted with Mallock's exotic portrait of its author as the aesthete, Mr. Rose in *The New Republic*, was surprised to find in him 'a heavy, shy, dull looking, brown moustachioed creature, over forty, much like Velasquez' Philip IV, lymphatic, dull, humourless.' Vernon Lee became a close friend of Pater and his sisters, but a year later the subtle, courageous critic's reserve of manner was still having its effect upon her, she could still talk of him as 'a very simple man avowedly afraid of almost everything.' The late Dr. F. W. Bussell, an intimate associate of Pater in his last years, had no recollection of an allusion to the fine arts in any conversation he had had with the man who had devoted so much of the perceptiveness and poetry that was in him to their interpretation, a silence that, even to a friend who had no interest in such matters, is remarkable enough. Equally remarkable, in this connection, is the explanation Pater gave to Dr. Bussell that, in making the famous statement in *The Renaissance* that to form habits was to have failed in life, he meant, of course, only bad habits; this explanation was quite consistent with the unobtrusive, apparently routine character of his Oxford existence, but we need no more be convinced by it than by the fact itself of Pater's regular habits which we may well consider as another manifestation of his enveloping reserve. It was a reserve that seems to have been particularly enveloping where the official circles of the University were concerned; their concern did not extend, on one occasion—though it be but a trifling instance—to the modest limit of including Pater, then unquestionably the most distinguished literary man of the day, among the guests invited to the unveiling of the Shelley memorial. It was less surprising at the time—it would be inconceivable now—that Pater's candidature for the Slade Professorship in 1885 was passed over in favour of that of Herkomer. There is a

certain seemliness (in retrospect, almost exquisite) about this unpretentious remoteness, in the busy, well-defined grooves of University Society, of a personality that, we know, sought excitement, with whatever sharp sense of sacrifice, rather in listening and looking than in taking any part. Pater may be imagined as responding to the beauty of Oxford and the picturesqueness of its ordinary activities not as someone to whom it was a home with its special mode of life, but, as much as possible, as an artist or even as a stranger, endeavouring to preserve the freshness of its charm, looking upon its chapels and gardens not as landmarks or as the haunts of personal memories, but with a curious eye, with the eye, for instance, of Paul Bourget, Pater's contemporary, and a lover of his prose, to whom Oxford was a place where, as he writes with almost a Paterian ring, 'audessus des larges dalles les cytises balancent les pluies d'or de leurs fleurs, les lilas frémissent avec leurs branches chargées de grappes violettes' and decorative sportsmen, 'ceux qui ont endossé le veste de flanelle ou blanche ou bleue,' pass to and fro in the streets. The sobriety and reserve of Pater's conduct, it must be said, did not hamper the growth of his literary influence either among the younger members of the University or elsewhere; his acquaintance was sought by the writers of the generation immediately succeeding him; and he emerged, in middle life, as an idiosyncratic social figure. His immaculate clothes, the aesthetic neatness of his surroundings, have often been recorded and so, still more often, have his apple-green ties; it may be a less familiar fact that he took his sisters to parties in Kate Greenaway dresses of the same brilliant hue. Such manifestations were doubtless concessions, concessions that were enjoyed, to the position he had achieved as the herald of a new cultural ideal; his social manner, however, was now marked by an assumed indifferentism and a kind of humorous perversity in intercourse. 'I would never travel abroad with Pater,' one of his colleagues is recorded as saying, 'he would say the steamboat was not a steamboat and that Calais was not Calais.' The anecdote that reports Pater as recommending that an examination candidate called Sanctuary be passed simply for the beauty of his name reveals an aspect of the same attitude. It was one which, while it lent a savour to Pater's social appearances, shed no light on the deep places of his character, but on the contrary gave an almost aggressive complexion to his reserve, which now took the form of a parade, so to speak, of paradox, against which unwanted intimacy was unlikely to make headway.

The publication, in 1907, of a life of Pater in two volumes might have been expected, and indeed attempted, to display completely its subject who, as a human being, was likely, as Edmund Gosse had predicted, to grow more and more shadowy. It was unfortunate that the biographer, Thomas Wright, in this important and almost undocu-

mented case, should have been a mere manufacturer of 'lives,' whose victims it may be noted, also included Kitchener and Fitzgerald. His book was received by the reputable magazines with the suspicion of its matter and the contempt of its style that it must arouse in the least sensitive reader. As far as can be ascertained, however, none of the reviewers, with the lightness of approach that is characteristic of reviewing, took the trouble to verify the highly detailed, fantastic picture that it draws, though the element of fantasy that had been put into it was very generally recognized, and *The Nation* observed, at least, that Pater's sisters, who were still alive, had apparently not been consulted by the author. The bulk of the dubious information it contained was evidently offered to Wright, who accepted it uncritically, by a south London eccentric, Richard C. Jackson, who died as recently as 1923. It tells of Pater's association with St Austin's Priory (now defunct) in the New Kent Road, of his ardent, intimate friendship with Jackson, who was active, within the precincts of the Priory as a 'lay-brother,' and claims that this association, this friendship, played a preponderant rôle in Pater's life. It is a claim that it is now difficult to disprove absolutely, resting as it does upon the testimony of persons who can no longer be consulted. Jackson is set before us by Wright as a man of handsome appearance and brilliant scholarship, with a refined taste in *bibelots* of all kinds ; as the possessor of a magnificent library, without access to which Pater's literary labours would hardly have been so thoroughly accomplished ; as, above all, the personality upon whom Pater's Marius was modelled, and the friend to whom Pater's attentions were so constant as to have the effect of importunity. People now living who had some acquaintance with Jackson, and whose evidence is reliable, remember on the other hand that he was an habitual romancer in the interest of his own greater glory as a scholar and patron of the arts which, in fact, never shone, except in Wright's book, beyond the borders of the Lambeth area, and, within them, was a beam largely of his own imagining ; he was regarded as a general nuisance in the district and was a particular nuisance to the Southwark librarian to whom he came, in search of civic distinction, with offers of worthless books from his collection. His possessions were sold at his death and found to be mostly junk, his interest in which had probably been in some measure that of a dealer. It may well be that his pretensions, which seem to have arisen from a mind clouded by the confusion in it of fact with fiction, had roots in a real enthusiasm for learning and the arts ; he was at any rate accepted in the part of 'Professor of Ecclesiastical History' by St. Austin's Priory. This institution, an extreme product of anglo-catholic revivalism, was not properly recognized by the anglican hierarchy. Its founder, Father Nugee, had ever been in conflict with bishops who objected, not only to the pomp of his services,

but to his taste for the performance of rites which, though Christian, were not laid down in any anglican liturgy. It was the mission of the settlement in the New Kent Road to bring religion into the lives of the poor of Walworth, and the splendour and perfume of the services at St. Austin's did succeed in thronging its chapel with visitors. The members of the brotherhood were men mostly of that special cast of temperament for whom the observance of elaborate ritual seems to fulfil a need almost, one might say, of nature. Pater's friends at Oxford knew him as a lover of all forms of ceremony—and it was a love he did not hesitate to advertise—but they had no knowledge whatever of the constant visits to Walworth, of the many aspiring, enthusiastic almost bohemian hours spent in an atmosphere of jokes, poetry and religion that Wright, in his biography, recounts with such painful gusto. If it is true that Pater derived some esoteric satisfaction, which he felt to be beyond explanation, from what would appear to be the somewhat vulgar apparatus of flowers, plate and vestments that was regularly set in motion at St. Austin's, if he was really drawn into friendship with Jackson by some fascination in the man on the nature of which, as in all such cases, speculation would be misplaced, then we should indeed have some evidence on which to proceed in any attempt to penetrate the causes there may have been of Pater's reserve of manner, of his studied impassivity at Oxford. Real external evidence that might help to dissipate the shadows in which Pater as a human being is enfolded would be of the highest interest, whatever weaknesses or wickednesses it uncovered—revelations, indeed, of the weaknesses of persons whose achievements have passed into history rather add colour to, than detract from, our estimate of their public value. It is nevertheless a ground for thankfulness that the reputation of Jackson as a maker of fables and Wright's known, irresponsibility as a writer make it impossible to say more, with any assurance, than that, as of interest to anyone attracted by ritual, St. Austin's was one of the churches visited by Pater, and that he was there brought into contact, perhaps only of the most superficial kind, with Richard Jackson, who was certainly a conspicuous figure in its ministrations.

Quite apart from any possibility of truths lying hidden or distorted in the pages of Wright's book, it must be clear to the intelligent reader of Pater's works that the appearance he presented in ordinary society was a mask; not that in his writings he can dispense with this protection but that he wears one there of a kind much less opaque, one glassy enough in fact for the true physiognomy to be visible beneath with its tremors of feeling, its grimaces even, which the glassy surface cannot, would not disguise, which it protects, to which it transmits its sheen. This quality of guarded self-revelation, this 'diaphanéité,' as we may in Pater's case describe it, becoming now and then an

absolute transparency, is the essence of the writer's literary style ; that it is so guarded, has misled critics, incongruously including Wilde, to define the ' formula,' as Pater would say, of his method of expression as an ascetic one, as founded upon notions of the value of restraint, of omission, of the exclusion of all 'surplusage.' They are notions which Pater himself put forward ; they are part of his defences and in his spasmodic submission to them he produces indeed a truly apolline, if hyperborean, effect, an effect perhaps too unvarying as of ' an even veil of lawn like white cloud,' or as of some retreat of personality like that vainly undertaken by Sebastian van Storck, ' to a still, drowsy, spell-bound world of perpetual ice.' It is in the essay on *Style*, that Pater makes his claims for the winnowing and economizing processes in prose writing, and even goes so far as to quote with approval the meaningless opinion that ' the artist may be known rather by what he omits,' meaningless because the nature of the artists omissions cannot be a matter of knowledge.¹ But the Essay does not dwell on such points, actually modifies them in the course of making them, vindicating, though in the interests of logical coherency, irregularities, surprises, afterthoughts, ' the long-contending, victoriously intricate sentence.' ' To the refined intelligence,' he wrote in another place, ' it would seem that there is something attractive in complex expression as such.' ' He was solicitous,' said Lionel Johnson, ' for the expression of truth, not in its nakedness, but in its felicity.' The personality that sought a voice with such deliberation was not of a kind that could neglect the value, indeed in this instance the precaution, of restraint ; equally, however, it was not one that could exercise restraint (unless it was to put a strain upon the truth) without much discursiveness and elaboration. It is a question, indeed, whether nakedness, simplicity, even clarity, do not always put a strain upon the truth ; they are commonly regarded as the marks of good prose writing, but pursuit of them results too often in suppressions of meaning. The outcome, for Pater's writing, of an alternation of precautionary reserve with the complexity that honesty of expression required was a style that, at its best, is beautiful for its ambiguity, not to say for its equivocation, for the coldness with which it is wrought and pared, side by side with the determination to exclude no subordinate clause, no parenthesis or qualification, the omission of which might leave in doubt the shimmering presence beneath of rich, throbbing feeling.

' It is of coldness always,' Pater wrote, ' that men die ;' and he never allowed, as A. C. Benson noted, the instinct for expression to be extinguished by the instinct for reticence. Looking at the matter somewhat differently, Edmund Gosse considered that the polish of

¹ It would be truer to say, and it would be true of Pater, that the artist is known by that at which he hints.

Pater's periods 'does not make up for their languor, for the faintness and softness that attended their slow manipulation.' Had their manipulation, however, been attended only by faintness and softness, the polish might have been expected to rub away any full expression of such tender material. Pater, as Henry James is reported to have said, was 'a deep purple man;' and the languors, exquisitely faint and soft as they were, into which at times he sunk, were traits less fundamental to his disposition than of the kind that must intermittently come to the relief of a spirit glowing like a powerful lamp that required constant, painful trimming, if it was not to become a vulgar beacon; it was a kind of violent ardour, rather than any languor, that Pater was concerned should be perceptible as the motive of his reticence. In reading him, we may feel, as he himself felt in reading Mérimée (the author of an impassive style beside which Pater's seems almost heated), that we have 'our hands on a serpent' or at least on a living force as hermetic and tortuous, but mysterious, rather than guileful. Appropriately enough, the matter of the *Essay on Style* closely reflects the ambiguity of Pater's characteristic manner; the recommendations of reticence with which it opens are quite overshadowed by the urgency of the appeals, with which it closes, for the quality of 'soul' in prose writing, which, as he says, gives a unity of 'perfume' to what is written, as distinct from any less heraclitean unity of form, a quality, he adds, that may repel us, but not because we misunderstand it; it is one which draws its riches from the depths of the writer's personality and from the images to be found there, 'the dim mirrors, the portraits, the lamps, the books, the hair-tresses of the dead, and visionary magic crystals in secret drawers.'

It must have been by Ruskin, whose *Modern Painters* he read as a youth, that Pater was moved to afford a predominating scope to his own peculiar 'spiritual ardency' in work so much of which was nominally of a critical historical order. He was certainly subject to the infection—though he was never its victim—of Ruskin's diction, imagery and music. The context of a description of the Alps as 'an apex of natural glory, towards which in broadening spaces of light, the whole of Europe slopes upwards' or of the robes of an empress as 'a maze of double coloured gems changing as she moved like the waves of the sea' would, in the absence of the knowledge of Pater's authorship, be given with some confidence as Ruskin; and so, to quote two further instances, would Pater's appreciation of the vastness of a cathedral as 'clearing away the confusions of the heart,' or his vision for expectant youth of 'how many fair cities and delicate sea-coasts are awaiting it.' But the fabric of the language, in which such Ruskinian accents are like interruptions of sunshine among the odyllic gleams of some thaumaturgical cavern, shares no general features, in the closeness of its web and the subaqueous hues of its capillary

threads, with Ruskin's full unhampered manner. Compared with him, Pater dwelt in a 'cleft of human life where the stars were visible at noonday,' visible, inevitably, with a strangeness and, with the infrequent rivalry of brighter lights, a splendour, which were a compensation for the confinement upon which they shed their rays; a confinement, nevertheless, which had its own tenebrous, elegiac magnificence. 'In the pages of Pater,' wrote George Moore, 'the English language lies in state;' and there is indeed a corpse-like refinement, a mortification, literally, of symbol and image, that hangs about his phrases. Yet those who characterise Pater's style by its 'deadness' are as misleading as those who dwell unduly upon its discipline; the narrow, obscure compass in which it moves is not only traversed by external flashes, but enshrines (and for a shrine, funeral ornament is suitable), the spirit that Pater, with discrimination, hesitated to present unvarnished to his readers—which mostly reaches them encoiled in rare words and finished metaphors giving, in every way, a fairer idea of its nature. The speech in which Pater chose to clothe his deepest sensations was often, as he might have said, daedal, chryselephantine; it is so in the celebrated lines on the Monna Lisa, the spirit of which, like an underground river fructifying the earth above it, transforms the paragraph's furbished, perfectionist structure. The method here employed, of the unruffled addition of one extraordinary image to another, to describe a many-sided personality is, it will be agreed, absolutely effective; Pater used it often again, to portray, for example his Dionysus, his Demeter and, most beautifully, his Persephone 'compact of sleep, and death, and flowers, but of narcotic flowers especially—a *revenant*, who in the garden of Aidoneus has eaten of the pomegranate, and bears always the secret of decay in her, of return to the grave, in the mystery of those swallowed seeds . . .'. Such subjects, placed an automatic check upon the flight of his imagination, necessarily limiting it to the extent, high flown though this might be, of his response to a concrete object or to a body of literary fact. Without this objective guide, when, infrequently, he draws nearer to pure fiction, the style founders, the gem-like flame is dimmed or burns too coarsely. In the *Imaginary Portraits*¹ in some of the *Miscellaneous Studies*, in certain pages of *Marius*, Pater's scruples, as an artist, about the exposure of his emotions, the demands of his conscience (equally as an artist) that these should not be suppressed, led him on the one hand, to a separation of form from matter so barren as to make parts of *Duke Carl of Rosenmold* and *Apollo and Picardy* unreadable, and, on the other, to a vulgar fulsomeness of

¹ It must be admitted that Pater considered these essays to be among his happiest compositions. They are certainly remarkable for the quality of historical intuition displayed in them, but their style lacks the comprehensive elaboration of the best essays of the *Renaissance* or of the discussions (as opposed to the narrative), in *Marius*.

tone (in *Emerald Uthwart* and *A Prince of Court Painters*), which shows little trace of the operation of his refined poetic instinct. It is difficult to believe that there is here, either, any real correspondence between the form and the matter, any approach to that ideal of their identification (a tiresome, but, in its vagueness, a valid commonplace of all criticism), towards which Pater strove to direct his efforts.

The matter of Pater's writing has the same limpid ambiguity as his language; the beatings of his heart are encased in a hard, transparent envelope of thought, an intellectual armour that was a foil, if not positively a warrant, for the dark cluster of sympathies that he really needed to diffuse into the world. He thought deeply, but he had less passion, though probably not less respect, for the elaboration of theories and principles than for the wisdom that was to be drawn from the working of human affections and impressions. He was almost of those 'to whom nothing has any real interest, or meaning, except as operative in a given person.' No oracle beside which living men had once hushed their voices had for him lost its vitality. With this temperamental bias, the history and criticism of the arts, as palpable, vivid records of human sensibility, claimed an earnest study for which the charms of theology, philosophy, metaphysics, which had also tempted his mind, were actually if not nominally surrendered. Pater enclasped the expansion, which was as much a rarefaction, of his feelings for art, in a doctrine of Parnassian objectivity, probably inspired by the gospel of Théophile Gautier, then revered by a rising generation of English writers among whom the most reverent was Swinburne, at one time Pater's friend. Expressions of this doctrine are to be found throughout his critical essays, most clearly in the *Renaissance* where, in the preamble to the essay on Giorgione, it is given formal elaboration; it tempers the emotionalism of *Greek Studies* and is an apposite, if faint, support of the essay on *Raphael*. It asserts the then perhaps neglected truism, of which we have since become weary, that the sensuous element in the visual arts is fundamental, that shapes, textures, materials, have a hedonistic function of their own to perform; that, and the corollary is erroneous, there are effects proper to various mediums and out of place elsewhere; a painter may render 'the dilatation of light in the eye' but it is questionable whether the plastic obligations of the sculptor can be reconciled with any complication of feeling incidental 'to a consciousness brooding with delight over itself.' This teaching wears a detached air that is consistently belied as Pater develops his themes; he continually finds that intuition, inspiration, reveal more than the 'contemplative evolution of general principles'; he willingly admits that distinctions between the arts according to medium may be refuted by example; and the irresistible presence in his finest pages of what we may guess to be more occult reactions has a warmth and subtlety that is not the product of any

theory; the heart of the matter is then plucked out by analogy. Pater's phrase for Raphael's Granducal Madonna, that it is 'like a single, simple axiomatic thought,' his ruthless sympathy with the androgynous, faintly smiling creatures of Botticelli's world, 'conscious of a passion and energy greater than any known issue of them explains,' his perception of that other faint smile of the figures of Aeginetan marbles¹ as having 'just that pathetic effect of Homer's conventional epithet "tender," when he speaks of the flesh of his heroes,' these interpretations reveal a sensuousness that extends beyond surfaces to deep, intangible imaginings, imaginings which may act like a refining fire upon our vision and are the power—a gift of eliciting what might be called the sensuous implications of works of art—by which the *Renaissance* and *Greek Studies* are likely to endure. The criticisms that have been made of Pater's scholarship, and the unfavourable inferences that have consequently been drawn as to the quality of his sensibilities, may be lightly taken. The conclusions of the most accurate historians are still liable to be reversed by fresh discovery. It is in the nature of research, in its results, to be continuously superseded, just as it is in the nature of the highest criticism to claim an absolute if inherent validity. The critic may be allowed to rely for facts on the data available in his day; it may even be said that he may rely for subjects upon the taste of his day. What posterity requires of him is that the value to him of whatever subject he approaches should be real, vivid, and that he should be able to convey the full sense of it in his writings. Pater's lines on the *Monna Lisa* and the *St. Anne* are not less moving, because he also does honour to the *Medusa* of the Uffizzi, now known to be spurious. We may admit that Pater's eye was deceived, but we may note as an example of the capriciousness of the historian's judgment, that Mrs. Mark Pattison attacked² Pater for his faith in what she called the myth of the authenticity of the Leonardesque angel in the *Baptism* of Verrocchio, a figure that expert criticism now accepts as Leonardo's. Much more a matter for regret is Pater's historical view of Michaelangelo as exclusively the fine flower of a growth that had been blossoming since the days of Giotto; we need not be concerned to dispute this view or to censure Pater's blindness to the deep-toned stirrings of the Baroque style in the unction of Michelangelo's approach to religious subjects; but it is with a sense of loss that we read, in the essay on Michelangelo of 'the opposition of the Catholic revival to art;' it is worth conceiving how Pater, had he breathed a

¹ Ruskin considered this smile to be quite without meaning. As far as can be ascertained there is no record of Ruskin expressing an opinion on Pater's criticism of Greek Art. It may be of interest to recall, however, that Ruskin is reported to have quoted with approval in one of the *Edinburgh Lectures*, from Pater's essay on Botticelli, though the quotation does not appear in the lectures as printed. Pater preceded Ruskin as the 'discoverer' of Botticelli for an English public.

² In the *Westminster Review*, 1873.

more relaxed aesthetic atmosphere, might—with his love of art in the service of religion—have interpreted for posterity the works of Bernini or Caravaggio, not to say those of Domenice Feti or G. M. Crespi to whom Pater's taste for the minor refinements of a style might have naturally drawn him. The historical value of Pater's writings upon art lies not so much in any questionable addition they made to the sum of the existing knowledge of artistic developments; it lies rather in the direct relationship they bear to his expressed views on the general problems of human living, to what has been called in connection with his name 'the new Cyrenaicism,' an aesthetic 'philosophy' of life of which one would not say, since it was at the time so generally in the air, that Pater was the founder but of which his books are certainly the finest expression, and, as such, formulate at its best the 'aestheticism' that was so strong an influence in the art and literature of the seventies to the nineties. The elaboration of this 'philosophy' in the *Conclusion* to the *Renaissance* and the discussions of it in *Marius the Epicurean* are celebrated. There is no need to restate in detail the sensationalism on which it is based, but it may be said that it was not new, that it is rightly called Aristippeian, withdrawing, as it does (almost exhausted in Pater's case, by doubt), from debate about the rival criteria of truth, to the re-assuring ground of direct sensation as the only test of Reality; and so we are enjoined to seek the richest sensations, experiences, to make of our lives simply a vessel for their reception; for such riches are inalienable, their enjoyment certain; we should bend our faculties to 'the apprehension, by dexterous act or diligently appreciative thought, of the highly coloured moments which are to pass away so quickly' and with 'a jealous estimate of gain and loss, use life . . . from dying hour to dying hour, as an end in itself.' It is the experience of passion that gives the finest colour to our vanishing days, and the wisest passion—perhaps because it is the safest, though Pater does not give this reason—is the poetic, the artistic one. For art comes to us professing to give nothing but the highest quality to the moment and for the sake of the moment. It is this particular modification of general, indiscriminating hedonism that characterizes later nineteenth-century aestheticism; Pater makes it in the *Conclusion* in the form of an exhortation and with a power of advocacy that is still difficult to resist.

'From dying hour to dying hour'; the use of the epithet alone suggests that whatever appeared hard, brazen in Pater's exposition of his hedonism was obscuring a current of feeling less bright and confident. The real impulse of his creative ardour had a deeper, more uncertain complexion. 'Something of the blossoming of the aloe,' he has said, 'is indeed an element in all true works of art.' Wherever he looked, and, in the dim, magnificent pages of *Marius*,

his gaze is widely cast, the prospect was saddened by a vision of 'the great stream of human tears falling away through the shadows of the world.' A sense of the pathos of natural necessity was ever present to Pater's mind, of that web in which we are caught, 'subtler than our subtlest nerves,' from which no system of thought or conduct can hope to extricate us. He was perpetually aware that a perfect state of society would be powerless against the sorrows and shortcomings of nature—disease and death, agonized partings, outraged attachments. In the beautiful chapter in *Marius*, 'Sunt Lachrymae Rerum,' he has drawn affecting pictures of the witlessness of old age, of infancy born to drudgery or crippled in body. To the sufferings of animals, as poignant illustrations of all those kinds of unhappiness against which the sufferer feels impotent, he was specially sensitive—to the look of mad appeal in the eyes of a wounded horse being led to slaughter, to the lingering end of a pet angora 'quite delicately human in its valedudinarianism' or to the ignorant serenity of the sacrificial cow 'still breathing deliciously of distant pastures' on its way to the altar. The most wonderful moment is still a dying moment, and there is a necessary desolation in things as they are. The human soul is always swelling against its luck, against brutal turns of circumstance in respect of which no cry for compensation will be answered here, of which we cannot know that it will pierce the heart of any divine providence presiding elsewhere. Meditating, in the presence of death, upon the fate of the spirit, the hopes that may rise in us are not more than 'a dream that lingers a moment, retreating before the dawn, incomplete, aimless, helpless; a thing with faint hearing, faint memory, faint power of touch; a breath, a flame in the doorway, a feather in the wind.' It is such an acute consciousness of suffering, such an earnest, poetic, but also insubstantial hope of some reality behind metaphysical speculations that supply the fire, the paradoxical ardour of a despair still seeking a solution, which animates with such a melancholy, infectious breath Pater's injunctions to us to gather rosebuds while we can. What the body of the critic's writings really places before us is neither a philosophy nor an aesthetic ideal, but an attitude of the heart that looks above all to the expansion of human sentiment as the most precious potentiality of life, the bud that is most worth while tending and plucking, the reward to be sought by any worthwhile hedonism. The arts enrich and refine, perhaps more than anything else, the constitution of our sentiments, but they do so not as presenting us with abstractions calculated to calm them; they do so as expressions of feeling that, if we approach them rightly, will raise, quicken or even tragically cast down our own. They are first and last human, and divorced from humanity would have no function to perform. We may go so far as to trust that, with whatever hesitations, Pater would have declined, if faced with such an unlikely issue,

to sacrifice an individual life to save an irreplaceable masterpiece. Whatever fineness he perceived in forms and textures was subordinate to warmer appreciations, of, for example, the hallowing effect of time, the beauty of a face in a picture, the inspiration, as in Greek art, of some passionate, dolorous myth or, as in the writings of Pascal, of a degree of cerebral disturbance. It is by such artistic communications that the range of our sentiments is enlarged, and that our lives, the continuous succession of our sensations, expend themselves in a wider, more variegated sphere. The colour of the passing moments will be more often a rich one if we receive sentimentally rather than critically our impressions of introspective passions, of insanity, of all the darker possibilities of the human consciousness. Painting, poetry and music simplify the effort in such cases of sentimental apprehension, so that monstrous loves, disorders of the senses that turn the influence of summer to a poison in the blood, the expansion in whatever medicated air of exotic flowers of sentiment, are felt to be among the acceptable manifestations of living. So it could be at any rate with Pater who also dwelt, with the same imaginative sympathy, on the mortifications of 'ascesis,' on the purposeless rigours, for example, of Lacedaemonian education, upon desecrations of the flesh in general; he did not shrink from exposing this side of his sensibilities, in *Denys l'Auxerrois* with its circumstantial account of the slaughter of its hero, in *Marius* with its single lurid chapter on the Roman games, and, most frankly, in *Emerald Uthwart* with its emphasis on wounds and punishments. It was a side of Pater that we need not recoil from relating to his tender consciousness of the world's suffering, nor need we hesitate to suppose that the fascination for him of physical horrors arose partly from their quality as a pretext for compassion; he may be imagined creating situations in his mind calculated to call forth all the resources of his pity—such an intense and valuable sentiment—by the effect of which he was elevated as much as saddened. His acceptance of, his sympathy for the 'undercurrent of horror which runs through the masque of spring,' his emphatic insistence, to take a particular example from *Greek Studies*, on the eternal combination of Dionysus Omophagus, 'the eater of raw flesh' with Dionysus Meilichius, 'the honey sweet,' required to be extended beyond the limits of aesthetic appreciations. If we are to live fully, if our experiences are to have the highest quality, then there must be a great extension of sympathy in the world. Pater's morality was all sympathy. It was his perpetual prayer to be saved from offences against his own affections; it may, indeed, well be true that the only *private* immorality consists in the violation of sympathy in pursuit of self-interest, and not least in the violation of our sympathy with ourselves which, needless to say, does not further our interests but, as Pater writes, is a standing force of humanity that should be an elementary ingredient of our social atmosphere. Self-pity disposes

us strongly to a tenderness for others so that, under its soft, insidious influence, the whole world may seem 'to present itself as a hospital of sick persons ; many of them sick in mind ; all of whom it would be a brutality not to humour, not to indulge.' Without such indulgence the hedonistic approach to life was bound to be a narrow one. Pater claimed for those in pursuit of the love of beauty 'an entire personal liberty, liberty of the heart and mind liberty above all from what may seem conventional answers to first questions.' An emotional freedom is needed that will save us from cramping our desires, affections, fancies. Straitened as these must be in the condition of the world, we may find that the arts, that an aesthetic vision of nature, come to us with a reinforced, compensating, feverish brilliancy. But the question remains open whether any perfect flowering of human sentiment, any true Cyrenaicism is possible without a wider diffusion of unqualified compassion among mankind than is ever likely to take place, of compassion with the complex web of human impulses and individual human destinies.



RECONSTRUCTION

ULSTER OUTLOOKS

BY TOM HARRISON

... —the plume and power
of narrow chimney in the sunset sky ;
the bridge-baulked jets of steam as trains go by ;
nostalgic hoot from ships that slip by night
down the dark channel : these by sound and sight
make up the world my heel and nostril know,
but not the world my pulses take for true.

But somehow these close images engage
the prompt responses only, pity, humour, rage,
and leave the quiet depths unmeasured still ;
whereas the heathered shoulder of a hill,
a quick cloud on the meadow, wind-lashed corn,
black wrinkled haws, grey tufted wool on thorn,
the high lark singing, the retreating sea—
these stab the heart with sharp humility.

(JOHN HEWITT, Belfast, 1943.)

I. *Land or Lagan?*¹

The Sperrins, the great slab of Slieve Gallion, table-topped Slemish of St. Patrick fame, the cragline behind Limavady, the lovely sweep where the Mounts of Mourne come down to the sea—romantic songs are seldom justified in the event, but Slieve Donnard does it for that characteristic Irish boy adrift and singing in London city. To see, from the tall, ungainly discomfort of the castle by the lake at Castlewellan, the cloud lift of winter morning—that is as fine as anything of Apennine, Ande or Alp. In the Silent Valley of Mourne one may find the same precious vacuum of peace from every feel of man, otherwise available, in my experience, only in deep-jungled

¹ I have spent this winter and spring in Ulster, and part of summer two years ago. I have visited nearly every part of the six counties, met every type, from peasant to Prime Minister. This outsider's analysis of a difficult set-up is offered with humility, but moderate confidence. For North-East Ireland has two clear lines of conflict which dominate :

1. Town-country conflict, already decisively won by the former in England, very different here.
2. Catholic-protestant, now taking new shape.

The first is relatively new, the second chronic. Both illuminate, and not only for Ulster, relationships between places and people, arts and living. In this article I will try to clarify the first ; next time, the second.

rivers of Papua or Borneo. Or look at Ulster's lakes, from vast, impersonal Lough Neagh, to the little ones, more lovely. Best of them, the somehow lonely yet lively Lough Beg, duck-teeming, strips of trees running along the points, the hollow spire rising sadly from Church Island, melancholy enough to have inspired John Meade Faulkner to write another, Ulster, *Moonfleet*.

I like most to walk the eighty miles of wandering north-east cliffline, with a flying start at Portrush, Ulster's seaside centre—flying to forget the inappropriate rash of brick and bungalow. Past the ruined arrogance of Dunluce Castle, by Bushmills, home of one of the safer Irish whiskies ('first distilled in 1606'), by-passing Ulster's one commercialisation of nature, the tollgates and guide-pimps around that bit of basalt, the 'Giant's Causeway.' For once Johnson was too mild when he replied to Boswell's question, 'Is not the Giant's Causeway worth seeing?', thus: 'Worth seeing? Yes; but not worth going to see.' It's worth going quite a way to avoid. Along White Park Bay's perfect mile of sand and rock, where the earliest signs of civilisation (about 5000 B.C.) have been found, the graceful Fulmar Petrels sit late winter, polished white marble figures about these cliffs, gliding off in occasional flight, only bird to defeat the D. H. Mosquito in air. So through the minute beauty of Ballintoy's fishing-boat harbour, above the swinging wooden bridge of Carrick-a-Rede, into Ballycastle, place of the last real Lammas Fair, and the fallen monastery, to Fair Head, Choughs and Peregrine Falcons, and the perfect small scene, Murlough Bay. Then south down the coast by the burned-out barracks at Torr Head, through the compact charms of Cushendun to Cushendall with cinema on Monday and Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday, and the queer tower built by a returned China merchant, complete with curfew-bell. And along fertile coast and white wave the way to Waterfoot, with its fierce Sabbath games of 'hurling,' on by the little cottage where crippled Abbey Theatre playwright George Shiels is preparing his 13th play. Then it is pleasant Glenarm and the Macdonnell castle's amiable ugliness, on the long new road to Larne's round watch-tower and the boats for Scotland.

Amid such visual beauty—and much more—what of the mind's eye? Many have painted Antrim's loveliness; none have done it well enough: echoes, not illuminations. Cushendun, at the foot of Glendun, is home of the 'Blue Hills of Antrim' school of painters, its maestro James Humbert Craig, R.H.A. (Royal Hibernian Academy), exponent of the sunlit shaft through scudding cloud, and gentle mountain blue against the mosaic of lowland cultivation. With seascapist, Frank McKelvey, R.H.A., Craig sets the standard. Most Ulstermen mistake this faithful colour-photography for art. The recent Civil Defence Exhibition in Belfast showed a mass of

keenness and competence from all over the country. But of 300 pictures, I estimate 280 were directly cushundone, blue hills, white cottages, rippling surf, sometimes vased flowers. No trace anywhere of outside influence, excepting two brave disasters in Seurat style, by fire-guard John Turner. Nor was there primitivism, excepting one man, Markey Robinson, suitably a pugilist, punching his paint with simple contemporary scenes. The exact representation of rural scenery delights the Ulster eye. R. H. Entee, in a new war-time periodical, *Ulster Parade* (No. 5) ; he sees a picture in the gallery, then :

Alone it held my spell-bound sight . . .
 So real that one could almost smell
 The salty tang of seaborne air,
 And see alighting on the swell
 The graceful gulls shown flying there.

But there's a bright side. These Ulster painters are trying hard now. They mostly see their country clean, and are happy, at this stage, to put the beauty straight to paint. In this they are, as we shall see, being truly Ulster, fresh in summer pleasure. Even the least-educated peasant is a colourist, witness the vivid orange and ultramarine carts, or the lurid impromptus, on walls and boards and roads, of royalty and battle on Orange Day (July 12). The first step has been taken : painting is now becoming respectable. Moreover, there's an important interior development, away from the tradition of representational efficiency planted by Sir John Lavery, through some alive young painters, working each in an individual manner. There's subtle R. C. Toogood ; classical creative John Luke ; Tom Carr from County Down, now gaining a London reputation ; Sydney Smith, as accurate and acute as his black beard ; Belfast-born Colin Middleton (poet too) of many dynamic styles, nearest approach to Ulster surrealist. There is no common style here, only a search. Others, older, left Ulster in despair—Charles Lamb, Norah McGuinness, Paul Henry, O'Rourke Dickey and the rest. One or two older men have stayed, notably William Connor, in his shabby studio opposite the Museum ; a sincere painter of city life ; Belfast rewards him by calling his work sordid. The young are having a hard fight to live. But they *are* fighting, for there is a new loyalty, not to flags or forms, but to the places and people and stills of this small land. The effect of the Cushendun outlook has been doubly disastrous. Craigism has determined both the native production *and* the native consumption, art's Ulster market.

Thanks partly to past art weakness, Ulster's beauty has not been much exported or widely understood. This painting is directly nostalgic and repetitive, not stimulating to the outsider. Tourist

traffic has not been of spoiling dimensions. The highlights are high, though, because of the lowlands, the 'drumlin' country of gentle hill and stream, innumerable patchwork of irregular cultivation, spread like a vast Victorian quilt over everything reasonably near sea level. Spilt across Derry, Down, Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone, Ulstermen and women coat the countryside's useful fertility with one-story cottages and multi-walled enclosures, creeping up into every hill-pocket, circling only the peat-bogs. The constant eccentricity of the land pattern, dwellings every few hundred yards, make the classic land of peasant, seldom near hunger, rarely in sight of certain security, even in this war. Four in ten farm holdings are under 15 acres, under 5 per cent above 100 acres. The apparatus of peasantry is still almost as on some Balkan backedge, despite modern advance in method, ploughing and sowing. The normal spade of the little farm is still the 'loy,' a simple stick with iron foot; the quaint 'flachter,' handplough with pyramidal iron arrowhead for peat digging; the wooden pincer'd 'thistle puller,' called 'clips' in Antrim; mountain draining spades, hand-milk-churns, potato 'skives' (baskets), the 'creepie' three-legged stools of rough wood; the hearty flails, in three parts—helve, beater and 'mid-kipple' joint of thong; the basket yarn-holders; 'beetles' by the fireside, for potato pounding; 'griddles' and suchlike for the beloved thin-cooking of wheat, oat or potato. Deep in the nine glens of Antrim are carts, simply a big box or basket on two crude shafts with a shaggy horse between, rough wood wheels. Archæology travels, living, into anthropology.

Anthropology moves off into geology, too, through the first of Ulster's three P's—Peat, Potatoes and Protestantism. Peat, hundreds of thousands of acres, mostly laid down within the few thousand years since man's island history, its soft smoke and smell the signature of Irish evening. No western land has been more lately affected by changes beyond man's control. Peat now covers old forest, and Ireland has less trees than any European country. Many still get kindling from watching in winter for the frost-free patches on the bog surface, or in summer where the dew lies least, thus locating a buried ancient trunk, to be finally assessed by an iron 'bog auger.' The peat is cut from May onwards, when the spuds are in.

After peat, Ulster's second foundation of soft rock, potato, introduced 1587, was fully established by 1660. Its bulk per acre gives feed to beast and man, at the rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ ton per head per annum, with a minimum of attention, and stacked in those long pyramidal heaps of earth over straw, which stamp the whole lowland face. Once the spud, that made this culture, let it down, by the blight of 1845 and 1846, with consequent famine. Hundreds of thousands died, and the disaster, blamed largely on England for restricting

reforms and withholding aid, started the mass immigration to America which, as well as leaving another sore, was to drain the young-mindedness of both Ulster and Eire for nearly a century. The benefit of their staying back is evident today, despite the war's large drain, which has no such implications of abandonment. Peat, potato, oats, a donkey pulling panniered saddle, switch-driven by bare-foot boy, are bits of Ulster's greatest industry, the exploitation of surface earth and subsurface peat. Across this, stray the numerable lines of lane, the intricate squares of white stone thatched with straw, rush or flax, a couple of outhouses tagged on to the muddy yard, plus peatstack, manure heap, 16 hens, 4 ducks and a turkey, all within easy eye of the one, stable-style, two flaps doors, leading into the living-kitchen, which may be bedroom too. Some five by eight yards seems the countryman's average *liebenstraum*. With this there is, despite the inward modern pull of vacuum cleaner, frigidaire, Odeon and corselette, a considerable contentment, most distinguished by its individual, topographical, separations. The dividing-up of house clusters into distinct units is, like so many Ulster things, relatively recent. I am interested to find that in things of the mind there is a somewhat similar tendency. Writers and thinkers love to aggregate, coagulate, clutter-up Bloomsbury, Papeete or Montparnasse, leaving the lands around sucked dry of creative urgency to swell these central marketing, mutual admiration societies. Most of Ulster's best have previously gone the same way—to London, or at the least Dublin. Today expatriation is vile-spoken, and the youngsters love to hate St. John Ervine (especially), Robert Lynd, Helen Waddell, Louis MacNiece, George A. Birmingham. The wide scatter of Ulster intellect is very striking. It can easily lead one to suppose there is little creative work going on in the north, whereas in the south the chaps cluster in Dublin, evident and audible. Wherever you go in the six counties, you're liable to bump a man—seldom a woman—dedicated to pen or brush, working quietly, maybe without a chance to talk shop once a quarter. Up at Carnlough, George Shiels, famous in Dublin and New York, hardly recognised in Belfast or London, is now doing his latest version of the politico-rural kitchen-tragicomedy (see *Professor Tim*, *The Rugged Path*, *The New Gossoon*, Macmillan). Down at little Loughgall, W. R. Rodgers, already known far outside Ireland, is a preacher on Sunday and a poet all the week. In smoky Lisburn, Roy McFadden; near Ballymena, sad Jack White; in charming Brook Cottage, outside Newcastle, the doyen of Ulster literary loyals, Richard Rowley, real name Dan Williams; Forest Reid, recluse in his Belfast home.

Though many of the younger element have never met one another, they have lately made some sensible collective efforts, cementing an amiable association. Only very faintly leftish, their tempo is beats

away from the young, so socially-conscious English or Welsh. They are entering the initial stages of creative consciousness, making the exciting discovery that one can do good creative work without going near Cyril Connolly or the Café Royal. In particular, two anthologies, *Lagan* (Ballymacash, Lisburn, 1943) and *Northern Harvest* (MacCord, Belfast, 1944), both published in the past twelvemonth, are full of remarkably even, well done poetry and prose, if much of it is flat and quiet, in the Ulster way afraid to start any strong emotion lest the old sores erupt again into religion or troubles which have to be ignored in the interests of any unity—and could *not* have been ignored a few years back.¹ No comparable area of England could do a third as well. *Ulster Parade*, a new magazine, is more 'middle-brow,' direct, amateur, yet strictly native, and already at its successful No. 6. Richard Rowley has started a Mourne Press for booklets of good writing. Robert Greacen and Roy McFadden have now done four sixpenny folios of new verse, *Irish Voices*. The *Dublin Bell*, Ireland's *Horizon*, devotes increasing space to Ulster. The Pen Club, long decrepit, has issued a revival pamphlet with (characteristically) no common statement but twelve separate individual welcomes. One contribution opens typically: 'That there are so many young Ulster poets at present writing good verse is evidence of a literary resurgence in our midst.' This is accepted by all, and one starts off by saying, 'the renaissance is being accomplished by a change of attitude to the writer on the part of the public,' while another sees that 'a great change is taking place. There is genuine and growing interest throughout the province in the work of Ulster writers.' So intricate, so numerous, are the possible sources of bitter disagreement between these writers, that they have chosen to write directly, somewhat superficially, avoiding, as yet, the bitter pills. That is both a limitation and an advance. At present, it is enough to be a loose federation, engaged in preliminary reconnaissance rather than renaissance, concerned to improve standards and elevate prestige. There is no sign of grouping, which certainly stimulates, but equally reduces initiative and the private quest for truth. The unit is still single home.

The 'intellectuals' (*pace* Lord Elton and Alfred Noyes) do little more than faithfully reflect and heighten the common temper. Whereas in the remoter places of Scotland or England, incessant is the townward drain, both of intellects and otherwise; and looking-inward to the city is even more extensive—in Ulster the relationship is still two-way. One one-roomed white home is still No. 1, neither despised nor dated, despite its 'out-of-dateness.' Half Ulster people are directly country, many more obliquely. The town-dwellers are historical babies. Very few towns are ancient, a few more than five hundred years old. The extent of town pride and interest is

¹ See second article on breakdown of old alignments in religion and politics.

distinctly less than in Lancs or Hants. I found it strong and traditional only in Londonderry, and curiously also in Coleraine, centred there partly on a rugger team. The rest are mainly aggregations of humans serving an area, economy based on distribution and co-ordination. One of the few Irish sociological studies, by an American, Dr. Arensberg shows how the average western town is only 'an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order.' Ballymena, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Ballyclare, have barely any centre, a nucleus. Even the church is not a single visual focus, for wheresoever one sect raises its spire in His name, another does likewise, and higher. Old or interesting churches are rare; most are ugly. The Orange Hall (Protestant secret society) is uglier, though sometimes eclipsed by the Hibernian Hall (Catholic secret society). The Town Hall may be larger than other buildings, perhaps, but with little centrifugal character, and often now reduced to a dance-hall bulging with dame-eager Americans. No snug country-town hotel welcomes the newly-come. Ulster hotels are abominable. I can only recommend from my experience, three, none pretentious, the last two 'old-fashioned'—the Antrim Arms, Glenarm; the Imperial, Bangor (good food); Nicholls, Bushmills. Reserves, occasionally good, Adair Arms, Ballymena, and Denver Arms, Downpatrick. The law court is liable to be the best building! There are a number of intelligent architects now available in Belfast, and they recently put on, with C.E.M.A. support, a tolerable if uninspired exhibition. In neat anomaly, the showpiece of 'modern' architecture is Clough Williams-Ellis building in memory of Lord Cushendun, at his name-place, the Craig's mecca.

So we are left with the hardware store. There's the pukka kingpin of Armagh, Omagh and Armoy. In lively competition for farmer custom, the various hardware merchants sprinkle pavements and even gutters with pots, pans, stoves, spades, ploughs, beautifully clean and cheap, performing their simple, service-to-the-land, function. At Maghera or Magherafelt this pattern is not obscured, as in England, by a multitude of accretions, the many paid landworkers spending, the well-off coming in to shop, the local factory and workshop of a decade's growth; the careless flow of arterial road. The characteristic Ulster shopping centre is an ordinary house, the selling from one room. So we find a single shop every two miles, a cluster of shops into township every eight miles, and a single city away on the flank, by the sea, looking towards England.

The city casts a threatening shadow westward. It is the outward artery of northern Ireland. To the newly awakened Ulster writers it is associated, by implication if not explicitly, with submergence of personality, with rootlessness and maybe frustration. The ablest young Ulster novelist, Michael McLaverty, son of a Belfast waiter, himself a Catholic school-teacher, has a story in *Northern Harvest*

which tells of city life in terms of the Belfast blitz, which kills off most of the characters! In his fine novel, *Lost Fields* (Faber, 1942), the poor Catholic family leaves the Belfast slums and goes back to the land, a peasant cottage. This is the whole drama. In his book of short stories (*The White Mare*, Mourne Press, 1943) he concentrates direct on love of countryside, telling an old man's love for his mare, a city man's love for the gamecock he takes out to illegal fights in the country beyond Lough Neagh, a schoolboy failing to be a weather-prophet, a farm boy who goes to sea and is unhappy. These tales are brilliantly done, but rather limited to the frustrations of the old, infirm, or infantile. Again, McLaverty introducing a new novelist, Hubert Quinn's *The Soil and the Stars* (*Belfast New's Letter Press*, 1943).

When he (the hero) is inveigled into marrying a girl for whom *the soil means nothing* and the city everything, we realise that the incompatibility of their union has already been foreshadowed.

Quinn's crude theme is the young Presbyterian Antrim farmer who for love moves to Belfast, cannot bear it, and leaves his wife for his small farm. This is solid meat for the Ulster novelist or dramatist—in England it would scarcely attract attention, the one-way journey is taken for granted. The new Ulster writing is stuffed full with permutations on the same theme. Joseph Tomelty, lively manager of Belfast's near-pioneering Group Theatre, has (in *Lagan*) a brilliantly depicted policeman who actually asks for a transfer from country to city because 'he felt his young life was stifled, he was missing something.' The result is not so anti-rural as at first appears. In Belfast he falls madly in love with a fine girl:

She was lovely, and he loved her. Now he could *go back to the country*. It didn't matter about protestant or catholic. Here was a woman he loved.

But being as it's Belfast, no good can be expected, and sure enough, in searching for an I.R.A. leader, the constable finds his beloved, *in flagrante professional prostitute!*

Long-nosed Sam Hanna Bell, a promising fiction writer, devotes his first book, *Summer Loanen* (Mourne Press, 1943), to farms and fields. In *The Broken Tree* the town friend begs the farmer to come and be civilised. The farmer resists until his prize cow dies, and he moves sadly to city and subsequent misery. All this is best put by city-dwelling John Hewitt, in his long *Conacre* (privately printed, 1943), which tells how a Belfast man seeks, and finds, solace, from the city:

And yet should these high chimneys tumble down,
the gantries sag and fall, and nettles crown
the festered mounds of rust above the marsh,
and herons nest, and kittiwakes cry harsh

over the banks where bridge and rigging met,
there is but little that I should regret.

For what was good here can be better still . . .

Ulster writers, by insisting on both sides of their culture, may do much to counteract a process which, almost unnoticed and wholly uncontrolled, has soiled the soul of England, and her economy. In Ulster the poet can sing of birds and trees, growth, natural and unashamed. In England the absorption of Stephen Spender, Mac-Niece transplanted, Kathleen Raine, Alex Comfort, David Gascoyne, is all with distress, decline, through to decay and perhaps death; their bird, the owl: their light, a quarter-moon on fallen pride. The Ulsterman nearest to a London temper is W. R. Rodgers, whose first poems made a stir both sides of the water. Hailed by English critics as a new force, in fact he combines the wider sophistication of frustration with the elementary virtuosity and Ulster sense which I have been illustrating. Moreover, his fertile mind turns out to have a rather limited range and technique, as the English are now noting, with some surprise—it would not surprise any student of Ulster. A recent Rodgers poem in the *New Statesmen* (December 1943) shows his vivid synthesis of native summer and Spenderic fear:

But nothing blinked: the ignorant ox browsed on,
And the reflective river brassily
Slewed by without a pause. At his foot,
Out of the bearded iris rose the bee
In drizzling sibilance.

Rodgers, from his Presbytery in a little Co. Fermanagh community, infuses despair with the confidence of earth's good calm; for instance, in *Northern Harvest*:

O these lakes and all gills that live in them,
These acres and all legs that walk on them,
These tall hills and all winds that cling to them,
Are part and parcel of me . . .

Compare two of the many lesser-known, remarkably keen, young Ulster poets: (1) John Irvine's *Spring Rhapsody*, and (2) painter Colin Middleton's *Crusade*:

(1) Oh splendid days of wind and sun
Of flying cloud and dipping swallow,
The blackbirds lost in ecstasy
But a wild wind bids me follow.

- (2) Sometimes I feel that Spring
 Is a green pain, a blade
 Piercing outwards ; it drives
 From darkness into daylight.

Poetry thus lends the weight of its strange evidence to the peat-bog, the potato and those paintings exhibited in sad similarity, proving the surviving simplicity of Ulster culture. The simplest social unit is the one which really *owns* the word town, here most applied to a field or farm. For Ulster is divided into tens of thousands of *Townlands*, dating into prehistory, and centring on a basic place name attached to a spot where no one may live today. A townland may be a few acres or a thousand, and the whole area takes name from one spot—which makes map reading and exact locating complicated ! The inhabitants are related as a close social grouping. This relationship, projected into private groups within the *towns* (as meant in modern sense), produces an effect exactly described by the leading Ulster folk-scholar, Dr. Estyn Evans (*Irish Heritage*, Dondalgan Press, 1943) :

Personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption : it must be admitted that the *corporate spirit* is poorly developed.

Belfast itself has been the subject of bitter political controversy and charges of incompetent administration, a commission of enquiry, and all. Belfast is also, incidentally, divided into townlands with legal and documentary validity, the names themselves now having lost all topical application to any known topography.

What, then, of Ulster's actual city? (We've had enough of its impacts). And of Ulster industrial life? The two are tied together by the silvered smoky thread of the River Lagan, from the lowland around Lough Neagh, Lurgan and Dromore too, through Lisburn to the banks of charming Belfast Lough. This, in a land almost without coal and iron, is the area of fingerpointing chimneys and fogmaking smoke. Lovely, too, in sunset evening from the hills above. There are mills, and very occasional workshops elsewhere, but you may go for days in five of the counties and see no trace of modern industry, except the landcraft of whisky. Flax provides Ulster's first industry, linen, actively initiated by a Huguenot, 1698, first mechanised 1828. Shipbuilding is second, centred on the great Harland and Woolf yards, dating to 1854. Despite these, and many other industrial units, the Belfast area never *seems* deeply industrialised, like Leeds or Glasgow. Partly, the country pressing in around Lagan and Lough is too pleasant ; partly rural influence dominates and technological mentality is weakly developed even among indus-

trialists. As one of the rare cultured upper-class Ulstermen, Denis Ireland, has lately put it (*Bell*, Feb. 1944) :

If Ireland is ever to include a living and prosperous Belfast . . . Belfast must begin to think, and Ireland must enlarge its conceptions of what constitutes an Irish way of life. The problem is there and cannot be dodged . . . with the year 1943 the 20th century has begun in earnest, and we in Ireland, in common with the rest of the world, have got to live in it.

Where else in modern Europe would this century be seriously hailed as stranger when nearly half exhausted? Yet the problem posed is truly crucial in Ulster, which has *not* integrated the conflicting elements of machine, man and ground. Few Belfast people see far ahead, or long around. They are inclined to be complacent in their commerce and boastful in their cups (of tea). They will (absurdly) use Belfast's long-ago title, 'Athens of the North.' Expatriate St. John Ervine has infuriatingly called the place 'ugly.' While Dublin's Seon O'Faolain has it 'a city of mixed grills and double whiskies,' Belfast, by faking the statistics, satisfies itself that it is bigger than Dublin. A writer in *Ulster Parade* (No. 5) puts it :

One tiny spot in N.E. Ireland is coloured red. Tiny! Yes, but possessing the biggest ship-building yards, the biggest linen factory, the biggest tobacco factory, the biggest rope-works, and the biggest whisky store in the world.

Such self-estimates are widely approved, by wishful city-men and apathetic peasants, who like to have such magnificence, provided it is somewhere else. Ulster's industry is run by a small, powerful group of humorous, kindly, but hard-headed men, conservative in every sense. At its best this class produces men like James Craig, Lord Craigavon. At its worst, it mistakes J. M. Craig for a great artist instead of a competent craftsman. This class seriously reduces support for artistic expression in the capital. There is no decent (let alone indecent) portrait painting. There is no progressive theatre, and the single Group Theatre is underfinanced and under-supported, though it has broken some new ground. Younger playwrights like Ruddick Millar and Thomas Carnduff are discouraged from experiment, and grow cautious. Music, apart from some choral singing, is at an incredibly low ebb, and there is no symphony orchestra in the whole country. Ballet, opera, modern architecture and sculpture, are almost unknown. The Belfast branch of the B.B.C. produces from its elephantine maws an occasional, bedraggled mouse. Normal B.B.C. caution is here carried to obsession, lest Catholic or Protestant, Unionist or Nationalist, start up. B.B.C. officials are far too Belfast-minded and too ignorant of the alert interests at stir outside.

As if to return the compliment of industrialists' neglect, younger writers and painters have had comparatively little to say of industry. Of the rare elders, Richard Rowley has tried to fit the industrial worker into the wider pattern in his *Workers* (Duckworth, 1923). But he fails, and his verses, then and now, roam off to cottages, old women, little pubs, and the Mountains of Mourne. In his *Machinery* :

The rivetters' hammers rung wi' a noise o' bells,
 Harsh, cruel bells, bells tollin' for the dead.
 The gantries stood up black against the sky ;
 Huge steely arms o' cranes moved back and fro
 Like giant beasts that's searchin' for their prey,
 Ready to stoop an' grip it.

Let the last word on this phase be spoken by W. R. Rodgers :

"Here in Ulster we are on the fringe of industrial civilisation. But we are still an agricultural people . . . Our pace is rural. The pattern of our religious beliefs are still unbroken, though somewhat nibbled at."

To sum up so far, Ulster is still profoundly soil-conscious, not just economically, or temporarily, but deeply, emotionally, even to the passion of poetry. The scattered pattern of living on this lovely land produces an amiable individualism, or more accurately a small unit interdependence and independence. This is reflected in building, shopping, writing and all. Belfast, the one major human accumulation, has not the *cultural* physiological dominance only too familiar in other modern countries. There is conscious resistance to the city octopus, its impersonality. All this does not mean that Ulster is a feckless, petty, peasant community. It is a community on the move, with new hopes and resolutions, and with a rapidly increasing self-criticism and native culture. Many individuals are working with a new interest and integrity. The atmosphere is optimistic, nothing like so depressed and apathetic as in England or Eire, despite all the historical difficulties of the social set-up. And Ulster is learning, from the hard experience of England, to avoid the anonymity of a culture mechanised over mind as well as body and money.

POST-VICTORIAN

BY ELIZABETH BOWEN

The great Victorian novelists did not complete their task, their survey of the English psychological scene. One by one they died ; their century ended, a decade or two before its nominal close. Then—as after one of those pauses in conversation when either exhaustion or danger is felt to be in the air—the subject was changed.

There came, with the early 1900's, a perceptible lightening, if a decrease in innocence : the Edwardian novelists were more frivolous, more pathetic. Their dread of dowdiness and longwindedness was marked ; content to pursue nothing to its logical finish, they reassured their readers while amusing them, and restored at least the fiction of a *beau monde*. They were on the side of fashion : to shine, for their characters, was the thing. Competent, nervous, and in their time daring, they redecorated the English literary haunted house. Their art was an effort to hush things up. Curiously enough, in view of that, almost all the novels I was forbidden to read as a child were contemporary, which was to say, Edwardian. They were said to be 'too grown up.' (To the infinitely more frightening Victorians, no ban attached whatsoever : a possible exception was *Jane Eyre*.) When, therefore, I did, as I could hardly fail to, read those Edwardian novels, I chiefly got the impression of being left out of something enjoyable. Here was life no longer in terms of power, as I as a child had seen it, but in terms of illusion for its own sake, of successful performance, of display. Yes, and here the illusion bent on the grown-up state, on its freedom, its stylishness, its esoteric quality. The fashions of the day, that I saw round me—artful silhouettes, intricate mounted hair-dressing, the roses, violets or cherries heaped high on hats—the constant laughter I heard in other rooms and the quick recourses, in my presence, to French, all contributed something to this. The Edwardians, perhaps to mark the belated accession of their King, did, however speciously, build up the grown-up idea. The distant existence of that *élite*, that group of performers that I approached so slowly and who might be no longer there by the time I reached them (a premonition which was to be justified) tormented me, in common with other children. I should like to know how the Edwardian novel affected its grown-up readers. In them too, I suppose, it played on the social nerve, the sensation of missing something.

That the Edwardians were, in fact, on the retreat, that they were fugitives from the preposterous English truths of Victorianism, putting up the best show they could, probably did not appear in

their own day. Their shallowness was a policy, however unconscious. We owe it to them to see not only the speciousness but the ingeniousness of their contrived illusion. This was only not stronger because they were poor in artists: it reaches a worthy level in the best of the novels of E. F. Benson; it attains to a sublimation, nothing to do with fear, in the later novels of Henry James.

What, then, was this task the Victorians failed to finish, and that the Edwardians declined to regard as theirs? A survey of emotion as an aggressive force, an account of the battle for power that goes on in every unit of English middle-class life. The Victorians' realism and thoroughness, with regard to what interested them, has perhaps been underrated: where these do not operate, where they are superseded by jocose patter or apparent prudery, I think we may assume the Victorians' interest flagged—for instance, I think it arguable that they were not, imaginatively, interested in sex, and that they were hardly aware of society. Their blind spots matter less than their concentration, from which some few blind spots could not fail to result: they concentrated on power and its symbols—property, God, the family. Of these, their analysis was unconscious: the order was one to which they fully subscribed; they had no idea that they were analysing it, or that, carried far enough, this must be destructive. In that sense, their innocence was complete.

For what they required to work on, for what magnetised them, the Victorians had no need to look far beyond the family. The family was the circuit: the compulsory closeness of its members to one another, like the voluntary closeness of people making a ring of contact to turn a table, generated something. Society was, for the Victorian novelists' purpose, comparatively negligible: as a concept they could and did ignore it; it might just exist as a looser outside ring, a supplementary system of awards and penalties, or an enlarged vague reproduction of the family pattern. Love was recognised as either promising an addition to the family structure by a right marriage, or threatening damage to it by a wrong one; apart from this, desire was sheer expense, and the lover from the outside, as a late-comer, must be either a nincompoop or a pirate . . . This would seem to hold good of Dickens and Trollope (whose personal sociability committed them to nothing stronger in writing than a good word for a good time had with good fellows, and left them derisive about any *beau monde*) and of the Brontë sisters, for all their stress on the isolated passion of individuals. As to George Eliot it seems doubtful: her analysis was more conscious, which makes her less Victorian. The most obvious instance is Charlotte M. Yonge, and the major exception Thackeray, whose sense of society was acute, and whose families are in a felt relation to it.

Thackeray was in another sense an exception: in his novels

there do exist grown-up people. For elsewhere, with the Victorians, we are in a world of dreadful empowered children. The rule of the seniors only is not questioned because, so visibly, they can enforce it; meanwhile, their juniors queue up, more or less impatiently awaiting their turn for power. The family gradations, though iron, are artificial: inwardly, everyone is the same age. The Victorians could not depict maturity because they did not believe in it. The father of the family was the extension of his youngest son's impotent buried wish, the mother, with her mysterious productivity, that of her daughter's daydream. How far the Victorian family was falsified by the mirror of Victorian art, or how far its characteristics were merely exaggerated, cannot be settled here: it is the art not the family that we study. For that matter, were the Victorian artists influenced by the passionate conjugality, and later equally passionate widowed seclusion, of their Queen? In its subjectivity, in its obsession with emotional power, the age was feminine: the assertions by the male of his masculinity, the propaganda for 'manliness' go to show it. The apron-string, so loudly denounced, was sought, and family life, through being ostensibly patriarchal, was able to cover much. Trollope, in whose own youthful experience family life had stood for debts and deathbeds, and Dickens, in whose it had stood for debts and disgrace, were active in forwarding the ideal.

Or, so it seemed to their readers and to themselves. It can be seen now that Victorian novel-writing, had it continued upon its course, would have endangered, not by frankness but by its innocent observations, the proprieties by which we must hope to live. It can be seen why the Edwardians took fright, and sought refuge in the society fairy-tale. It was certainly not the Edwardians who were the *enfants terribles*. As it happened, the Victorians were interrupted; death hustled them, one by one, from the room. We may only now realise that these exits, and, still more, the nervous change of subject that followed them, were a set-back for the genuine English novel. Its continuity seems to be broken up. Since then, we have a few brilliant phenomena, but, on the whole, a succession of false starts.

Have we, today, any serious novelist who has taken up, or even attempted to take up, at the point where the Victorians left off?

A possible answer might be, Miss Compton Burnett, whose latest novel, *Elders and Betters* (Gollancz, 9s. 6d.) calls for some fresh discussion of her position. She, like the Victorians, deals with English middle-class family life—her concentration on it is even more frankly narrow. In form, it is true, her novels are as ultra-Edwardian; their pages present an attractive lightness, through all the weight being thrown on elliptical dialogue; but, beyond that, their unlikeness to the Edwardian is infinite—to begin and end with, they allow

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no place for illusion. They are, at the first glance, unlike the Victorian in being static (time is never a factor in them), in being unsensuous and unvisual, in refusing to differentiate between comedy and tragedy, in being without remorse. They resemble the Victorian in their sedateness, and in their atmosphere of physical and social security. Her avoidance of faked, or outward, Victorianism, however, is marked: we find ourselves with this, and more, guarantees that Miss Compton Burnett is not merely copying but actually continuing the Victorian novel.

She continues it, that is to say, from the inside. Her being in the succession shows in her approach to her subject, rather than in her choice of it—for the family as a subject has never been out of fashion; there is no question of its being reinstated. What Miss Compton Burnett revives is a way of seeing; she sees, with hyperacute vision, what the Victorians saw, and what they had still to see. She has been too clever, or too instinctively wise, to set her novels inside any stated time: the idiom of talk is modern, the way of living dates from thirty to forty years back. Costume and accessories play so little part that her characters sometimes give the effect of being physically, as well as psychologically, in the nude, and of not only standing and moving about in but actually sitting on thin air. For some reason, this heightens their reality. In space, they move about very little: they go for short walks, which generally have an object, or advance on each other's houses in groups, like bomber formations. They speak of what they will do, and what they have done, but are seldom to be watched actually doing it—in *Elders and Betters*, we do see Anna burning the will: on examination, we find this to be necessary, for this act she will not admit, and so can never describe . . . This bareness, which starves the reader's imagination and puts the whole test of the plot to his intellect is, surely, un-Victorian? Miss Compton Burnett has stripped the Victorian novel of everything but its essentials—which must have been fewer than we thought. Her interest is in its logic, which she applies anew.

As a title, *Elders and Betters* is ironical: everyone in this novel is the same age, and nobody is admirable. In a Victorian novel, the characters fail to impose upon the reader; here, they fail to impose upon each other. The revolution, foreseeable, long overdue, has arrived—without disturbing a single impalpable cup on the impalpable drawing-room mantelpiece. It has been succeeded by this timeless anarchy, in which meals are served and eaten, *vi*-its paid, engagements to marry contracted and broken off. Everything that was due to happen in the world the Victorians posited, and condoned, has happened—but, apparently, there is still more to come: such worlds are not easily finished with, and Miss Compton

Burnett may not see the finish herself. For one thing, that disrespect for all other people underlying Victorian manners (as Victorians showed them) has not yet come to the end of its free say, and fear has not yet revenged itself to the full. The passive characters, almost all young men, marvel at the others, but not much or for long; they return to marvelling at themselves. Only the callous or those who recuperate quickly can survive, but in *Elders and Betters* everyone does survive—except Aunt Jessica, who commits suicide after the scene with Anna. In this we are true to the masters; in the Victorian novel people successfully die of their own death-wishes (as Aunt Sukey dies in *Elders and Betters*), but nobody ever dies of an indignity.

Miss Compton Burnett shows, in *Elders and Betters*, that she can carry weight without losing height. She has been becoming, with each novel, less abstract, more nearly possible to enclose in the human fold. *Elders and Betters* is, compared, for instance, with *Brothers and Sisters*, *terre à terre*; but with that I greet a solid gain in effect. The more she masters what I have called her logic, the more material she can use. Her technique for melodrama has been by degrees perfected, and is now quite superb: I know nothing to equal Chapter X of this book—the duel in Aunt Sukey's death-chamber, after Aunt Sukey's death. Only second to this is the lunch-party, at which two families voice their disgust at old Mr. Calderon's engagement to Florence, the governess's young niece. There is an advance, too (again, a logical one), in the articulateness of employed persons: nothing protects the Donnes against Cook and Ethel, with whom even Anna is placatory. The importance of money has not budged, but dependence is now felt by the monied side—also, there is, with regard to employed persons, either a weakening or a belated dawn of grace. In one of the earlier novels, it seemed consistent that a child of the house should laugh every time the governess eats; in *Elders and Betters*, a child suffers because he has left a governess out in the dusk and rain. And religion, the worship in the rock garden, for the first time enters the scene.

The post-Victorian novel, in Miss Compton Burnett's hands, keeps its course parallel with our modern experience, on which it offers, from time to time, a not irrelevant comment in its own language. To the authority of the old, relentless tradition, it has added an authority of its own.

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